

SANTS, SADHS, MAHATMAS AND DEVOTEES OF THE PAST

(THEIR SHORT BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES)

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INTRODUCTION

It is by the grace of devotees that an ever growing tradition of Parmarth and Bhakti (devotion) has been created in this region. As time passed, Jivas fit for higher and higher grades of Parmarth came to be born here. Now, in Kali Yug, we are apparently passing through a very bad time. But the Adhikár or fitness for performing the Parmáarth prescribed by Sants has grown only now and Sants, too, have made Their gracious advent in this world only in this age. The first Sant-Incarnate was Kabir Saheb who gave out the secrets of Surat and Shabd, and also of Sat-Desh which is beyond and above the regions of Brahm and Pár-Brahm.

Before Kabir Saheb and after Him, many Sants, Sadhs, Mahátmás and Faqírs came and have been coming to this world. The religions of all true Sants and Faqirs are one and the same and there is no difference between them.

On ascending to Sach Khand, Surat hears Dhuns (sounds) of 'Haq Haq' and 'Sat Sat'. Although the words, Sant and Faqir (or Haq and Satnám) are different in expression, they signify the same imperishable and indestructible region of Sat Lok.

Actually, the biographies of Faqirs, Sants, Sadhs and Mahatmas cannot be written in the form and style ordinarily adopted in books of biography, for, the special functions of their lives relate to higher regions and inner secrets which remain hidden from the sight of the ordinary people of the world. The true life and work of Sants, Sádhs and Mahatmas are contained in their discourses and in the verses composed by them.

No specialised research of any kind was undertaken for writing this book, nor was this considered to be at all necessary. The only object which was kept in view was to

collect from various books and treatises the main facts of the lives of Faqirs, Sants, Sadhs and Mahatmas and their typical discourses and poetical compositions, and then present these materials as one single volume so that Jivas with a religious bent may easily get them at one place. The names of sages, ascetics, religious minded kings and other devotees are often to be found in the writings of Sants, Sadhs and Mahatmas. Brief accounts concerning them have also been given in this book.

It is hoped that on reading this book waves of Bhakti (devotion) and emotion will surge forth in the hearts of religious minded persons and they will become all the more inclined to study the writings of Sants, Sadhs and Mahatmas, which will lead them to realize the need for the search of a true and awakened Guru and also of the correct path so that true good may be done to their soul. Progress in Parmarth is impossible without the help of a true and awakened Guru.

Without the instructions of such a Guru, one cannot escape from the pain and misery of repeated births and deaths. Guru is the name of the Supreme Being and none else is deserving of that appellation and status.

Guru is Brahmá, Vishnu, Shiva and Pár-Brahm. Hence obeisance to Him.

Bhakti (devotion) is nothing but developing deep love for Guru. This Bhakti is of eleven different kinds — love for Guru's qualities and greatness, love for Guru's form, love stemming from the remembrance of Guru, love inherent in Guru's Sewá, love due to the feeling of being the Guru's slave, love for Guru as a friend, love for Guru as existing between husband and wife, love for Guru as His son, love flowing from sacrificing or offering oneself to Guru, love for Him in being lost in His thought and meditation, and love in His contemplation in a state of intense yearning for Him.

There are three letters in भक्ति "Bhakti". The first letter

is 'भ' (Bha) which stands for भव (Bhav) or the world, signifying that Bhakti rids one of worldly pain and suffering. The second letter is 'क' (Ka) representing कल्याण (Kalyán), that is, good of the soul which Bhakti brings in its wake. The third letter is ति (Ti) which stands for तीव्र (Tívrá) or keen, indicating that Bhakti engenders keen Gyán (knowledge). To ever remain bound down by the Guru's commands constitutes Bhakti. And Bhakti really consists in moulding one's conduct according to the Guru's behests and in giving up such activities as are detrimental to Bhakti.

Bhakti is of three grades — the highest, the medium and the lowest. His Bhakti pertains to the highest grade in whose eyes the Lord is all-pervading and omnipresent, who realizes that all objects and beings are permeated through and through by Him like water and its wave, and who finds His impulse to be present in friend and foe alike. His Bhakti is of a medium standard who has love for the Lord, who mixes with Bhakts (devotees) and is on friendly terms with them and does not associate with those who lack Bhakti or devotion. And that Jiva's Bhakti is of an inferior grade who has faith in the Lord and is also given to His worship but has no love and affection for His Bhakts or devotees.

Bhakti can also be classified as Sato-guní, Rajo-guní and Tamo-guní. That Bhakti is Sato-guni which is not tainted by any desire. The Bhakti which is associated with any kind of desire, that is, सकाम Sakám, is, Rajo-guni. And that Bhakti is Tamo-guni which is resorted to with the motive of vanquishing the enemy.

There is yet another kind of classification of Bhakti. It is firstly मानस Mánas where the devotee mentally performs the acts of service and devotion, secondly, वाचक Báchak where he performs devotion by words of mouth and, thirdly, कायिक Káyik or physical, where he does so by his body.

Bhakti has also been said to be of four kinds. There is the Bhakti of (1) आर्त Árta, that is, devotion performed by

one when afflicted with some kind of pain or suffering, e.g., Draupadi, the drowning elephant, etc. ; (2) devotion by the seeker and the person who tries to find the path to redemption, like Pareekshit, etc., (3) the अर्थार्थी Arthārthí, devotion performed by one seeking wealth and treasures, like Dhruv, etc. ; and (4) the ज्ञानी Gyání, devotion performed by the seeker after knowledge, like Prahlád, etc.

According to another classification, Bhakti is of three kinds — firstly, that performed by one's own self, secondly, that which one gets performed by others, after having explained to them the ways of Bhakti, and, thirdly, the joy and satisfaction which one feels on seeing others performing Bhakti.

Then again, it has been said that Bhakti is of nine categories or it can be performed in nine ways, e.g., listening to the greatness of the Lord, singing His praise, remembering Him, performing His Sewa, worshipping Him, paying obeisance to Him, acting and behaving as His slave, treating Him as one's friend, and offering oneself completely to Him.

Bhakti has also been said to be of eleven kinds : Firstly, attending Satsang ; secondly, receiving the mercy of devotees and making them happy and pleased ; thirdly, cherishing regard for and faith in the conduct of devotees ; fourthly, listening to the activities of devotees and the Lord ; fifthly, engendering love for the Lord's form after having heard about it ; sixthly, acquiring precise knowledge of the Lord's form as well as one's own form ; seventhly, enhancing one's love for the Lord's form ; eighthly, increasingly clear manifestation of His form within one day by day ; ninthly, dawning of compassion within one ; tenthly, the dawning of omniscience ; and eleventhly, the attainment of a stage such that not even a moment passes without the contemplation of the Lord's form.

Then, based on intensity and refineness developing gradually as a result of gradations in virtues like charity, etc., Bhakti is of thirty kinds.

All these grades and kinds have been enumerated because according as the manner in which and the feeling or attitude with which the mind of a devotee is drawn to the Lord and the Guru, it constitutes a kind of Bhakti (devotion.)

One devotee asked his Guru, "Maharaj ! The number of Tattwas (elements) has been variously described as twentyfour, seventeen, sixteen, eight, seven, five, and three. What can be the reason of this controversy ?" The answer given was : "There is no controversy here. He who thought that one particular Tattwa was mixed up with another, counted the total number as one less than the number arrived at by another person who regarded the two Tattwas as separate. It is like a person, who saw a banyan tree and said that it had two branches while another person, who saw four branches in it and asserted that a banyan tree had four branches. But, the tree is one and the same. Similarly Bhakti is one and the same. It appears to be of various kinds depending on the way in which the devotee's mind is drawn to the Lord. The main object of every kind of Bhakti is that love for Guru is engendered somehow or the other. So long as that love does not attain perfection, it is the stage of endeavour. Attainment of perfection marks the fruit of that endeavour. And that is the fruit of Bhakti.

Jivas and their kith and kin are purified by just remembering devotees, not to speak of the benefit which is derived by seeing, touching or serving the devotees. No adequate description is possible of the greatness and glory of devotees. The devotee is of the form of the Lord Himself.

Said Haq (The Lord) to Paighambar (Prophet), "You will not find Me either on the earth or in the sky. In the heart of My devotee do I abide. If you want to meet Me, go to him and ask him for Me".

The status and greatness of devotees is beyond all description. It is for the sake of devotees that there have been so many incarnations to remove their pain and suffering.

If My devotee is in distress, I am distressed too. This is true of the past, present and future. Instantly will I make My appearance at the spot and dispel all his woes and sufferings.

Listening to and singing the hallowed deeds and virtues of devotees help vile Jivas and sinners in getting across the ocean of worldly existence.

PART I

DEVOTEES OF YORE — SAGES, ASCETICS, KINGS AND OTHERS

(1) SANAK AND OTHERS

Sanak, Sanandan, Sanátan, Sanat Kumár and Sanat Suját are said to be the five sons of Brahmá. Some think that Sanat Kumar and Sanat Sujat are one and the same person and according to them, Brahmá has really four sons. They have the look or appearance of boys at all times. They gave instructions on esoteric principles to Sukh Dev and Bhishma. Prithu received initiation from Sanat Kumar. The ascetic, Sanat Sujat, gave King Dhrit Ráshtra many valuable instructions at the time of Maha Bharat war. At times, these five brothers have one of them as the speaker or elucidator while the other four receive instructions from him as listeners.

(2) VASHISHTH

He was one of the seven sages — Maríchí, Atrí, Angirá, Pulastya, Puhla, Kratu and Vashishth. The name of his wife was Arundhatí. When father Brahmá ordered him to go to the earth and act as the priest of "Surya Banshi" kings of solar dynasty, he showed considerable hesitation in accepting this assignment. But on being told that Brahm was going to incarnate himself as Ram in this very dynasty, he gladly agreed to do this disreputable work. It was only because of the encouragement given by him and the Mantras (esoteric formulas) which he chanted that Bhagirath could bring Gangá (the river Ganges) to this earth. It was he who made king Dasarath perform the "Putreshti Yagya" (sacrificial rite performed with the object of having the gift of a son), as a result of which Shri Ram Chandra Ji incarnated himself (as his son). He made his life as a priest fruitful by having Shri Ram

Chandra Ji as his disciple. In the book Yoga Váshishth, there is reference to the modes and methods of Yoga in which he had given lessons to Shri Ram Chandra Ji.

Once in the course of some conversation between him and Vishwá Mitra, the dispute arose as to which was superior, Satsang or penance? According to Vashishth Ji, Satsang occupied a higher position, but Vishwa Mitra, asserted that penance was superior to Satsang. The two sages then went to the Sesh Bhagwán (the serpent Sesh, who is the king of serpent race and of Pátál or neither regions) for a decision. The Sesh god said that he was then carrying the earth on his head, and only if one of them took that load off his head, he could give his verdict. At this Vishwá Mitra Ji, who was very proud of his penance, sacrificed the fruits of ten thousand years of his penance, and attempted to take the earth on his head, but he failed. The earth ran into tremors and there was great panic in the world. Vashishth Ji then sacrificed the fruit of only half a moment of the Satsang which stood to his credit and took the earth on his head. Indeed, he held it on his head, for a long time. When the Sesh god was about to take the earth back on his head, Vishwa Mitra said to him "You have not given your decision yet". The god replied laughing "The decision is obvious and automatic; penance for thousands of years bears no comparison with even half a moment of Satsang".

(3) B H R I G U

He was one of Brahmá's sons who were the creations of his mind. The famous Maharshi*, Chyavan, was Bhrigu's son. A well-known incident of his life is described below.

Once in a congregation of sages a point of dispute arose as to who was the greatest amongst the three gods Brahmá, Vishnu and Mahá Dev. Bhrigu Ji was requested to ascertain the truth. He first went to the court of his father

* Great sage,

Brahmá, but he neither saluted him (Brahmá) nor sang his praise. Brahmá became very angry at this kind of attitude of his son but forgave him thinking that he was, after all, his own son. Thereafter, Bhrigu Ji went to Shiv Ji on the Kailásh mountain. Shiv Ji came forward to receive him very affectionately, but Bhrigu Ji refused to reciprocate his gesture saying that he was subject to evil tendencies. At this, Shiv Ji got infuriated and, raising his trident, ran after Bhrigu Ji to kill him. Párvatí, Shiv Ji's consort, grasped Shivji's feet and prayed, and she was thus able to pacify him.

At the end, Bhrigu Ji went to the lord Vishnu, who was lying asleep at that time. Bhrigu Ji gave a kick on his chest. The lord Vishnu instantly got up from his bed and placing his head on Bhrigu Ji's feet, paid obeisance to him and said "Thy feet are so tender and this chest of mine is as hard as stone. Thou must have suffered great pain".

On coming back, Bhrigu Ji went to the congregation of sages and gave them an account of his experiences. They unanimously declared that Vishnu was undoubtedly the greatest of the three gods.

(4) SHUKRÁCHÁRYA

He was the Guru of the demons. Though living in the midst of demons, he always used to give them instructions on morality and religion. It was as a result of his influence that there could be devotees like Prahlád, Virochan, Bali and others amongst them. He knew how to revive dead persons, and could bring back demons killed in battles to life. Brihaspati (the Guru of the gods) sent his son, Kach, to Shukráchárya to acquire the aforesaid knowledge from him, but Kach failed to do so.

(5) DATTATREYA

His father was Maharshi Atri and his mother, Ansooyá. He liked playing with boys, but even while playing, he would

remain lost in introspection. All boys used to remain happy and pleased in his company and they would not like to be separated from him even for a moment. But their company was an obstacle in the way of his Yoga Abhyas (practice of Yoga).

To extricate himself from their company, he one day entered a tank and would not come out for three days. The boys kept a watch on the tank. They became very glad when Dattatreya came out of it.

Thereafter, he would not speak, as if he had turned dumb. All the boys then started weeping and wailing. They began to offer prayers to him so that he might be pleased to speak to them. Dattatreya found that his strategy had failed and he thought that the boys were now trying to stick to him all the more tenaciously.

Dattatreya entered the tank again but the boys would not give up hopes. Dattatreya came out of the tank after three days, but, this time, he appeared in a strange garb, holding on his left a beautiful nymph and carrying in his right hand a jug of wine.

Seeing him in this condition, the boys turned away from him. They began to speak very ill of him, but the more sober amongst them started saying that one should not calumniate anybody, as, by just looking at his outer conduct and appearance, one cannot judge what is transpiring within him.

Dattatreya adopted twentyfour preceptors. He regarded anybody from whom he learnt anything as his preceptor.

(6) Y Á G Y A V A L K Y A

He was the nephew (sister's son) of the great sage Vaishampáyan, who used to give lessons in the Vedas. Many

students studied the Vedas under him. Yágya Valkya was one of them.

Once all the sages formed a society and made a rule that any sage who would fail to be present at a meeting of that society on a particular day would be guilty of Brahmicide. It so happened that the Shrádh ceremony of Vaisham Páyan's father was to be held on that particular day. Hence, he could not attend the meeting on that day, and he asked his disciples to atone for the sin committed by him. Yagya Valkya said "These are all mere kids, and so, I alone shall make the atonement". At this, Vaisham Payan said "No, all should do it together". Yagya Valkya, however, insisted that he would do it all alone. Vaisham Payan became infuriated at this and he broke forth "You are very proud, and I order you to disgorge the part of Yajur Veda which you learnt from me". At his command, Yagya Valkya disgorged all those hymns in a different form and the other disciples swallowed them after having assumed the forms of "Títar" or patridges.

It is these hymns which constitute the branch of Yajur Ved called Krishna Yaju. Brahmans who study and chant that branch are called Taittriya (descending from or pertaining to the "Titar" or patridge).

Once the great king Janak was seized with a desire to acquire knowledge concerning Brahm from a "Brahm Nisht" guru (a guru who was a devout worshipper of Brahm). And so, he thought of a device for testing if a sage was really "Brahm Nisht". He invited all well known sages and brought to his court a thousand golden cows with calves. Addressing the sages, he said "Whoever amongst you is Brahm Nisht may please bring these cows to life and then take them away". But, out of courtesy, none of the sages would come forward. Then, Yagya Valkya asked one of his disciples to take away the cows. This initiated encounters between him and the other sages, including Gárgi, on the interpretation of the Shastras (scriptures). He could answer all their questions and they were all satisfied.

(7) A G A S T Y A

Once the Vindhya mountain became so high that the sun's path became blocked. The sun took the refuge of great sage Agastya, who told the Vindhya mountain "I have to go to the south on pilgrimage but, since you are so high, how can I scale you"? Hearing this, the Vindhya mountain fell prostrate at his feet. Crossing him, Agastya said "Remain lying like this so long as I do not return". With great humility and cheerfulness, the Vindhya mountain submitted to abide by his order. But, Agastya never returned and the Vindhya mountain has been lying in the same posture since then.

When Indra killed the demon Vritrásur, the demon called Káleya started slaughtering sages and ascetics. During day time, he would remain in hiding in the sea, and at night he would come out and devour sages living in forests. The gods took the refuge of Agastya. He took the entire sea in the palm of his hand and drank it up. The gods then killed the demons.

(8) J A D B H A R A T

In days of yore, there was a very powerful king called Bharat who was also a great devotee. It is after him that this country has come to be called 'Bhárat Varsha'. During his last days he developed strong attachment towards a young deer, and so, after his death, he assumed the form of a deer. Leaving the form of the deer, he, in his next life, was born as Jad Bharat in a high-class Brahman family. He remembered his past life, and hence, fearing lest he should again become entangled in attachments, he began to feign himself as a mad, inert, deaf and blind person. This is why he used to be called Jad (inert) Bharat.

Once the ring-leader of some robbers decided to make a human sacrifice before the goddess Bhādra Kālī with a view to having the gift of a son. His accomplices tied Jad Bharat up with a rope and took him to the goddess's temple. When

the priest took the sword in his hand and was about to strike him down, a fearful sound emanated from the idol and the goddess Kálí, manifesting herself in physical form, snatched the sword from the priest's hand and killed all the evil-doers.

One day, Ráhu Gan, the king of the country called Sindhu Souvír, was going to the hermitage of the ascetic, Kapil with the object of acquiring spiritual knowledge. On the way, the number of palanquin-bearers was found short by one. By chance, Jad Bharat came there. The palanquin-bearers made him join them forcibly. Lest he should trample under foot and kill some worm or ant, Jad Bharat was keeping an eye on the road ahead while moving forward, due to which, he was not being able to pace evenly with the other palanquin-bearers and the palanquin was limping on one side. At this, the king took the palanquin bearers to task. They complained "We are going all right but this new man is not stepping properly". Hearing this and not recognizing Jad Bharat, the king severely reprimanded him. Jad Bharat listened to his rebuke calmly and at the end gave him a nice reply which also bespoke great wisdom. The king thereupon became certain that he must be some Mahatma (great soul). He instantly came down from the palanquin and falling prostrate at Jad Bharat's feet, begged for his pardon.

The king then asked him "What is life really ?" In reply, Jad Bharat narrated an anecdote :

A certain person while running for fear of beasts of the jungle, fell into a well, but he was able to catch hold of the branch of a tree hanging inside the well, and thus saved himself from drowning. He, however, saw two rats gnawing at the very same branch to which he was holding on and, at the same time, there was a snake down below in the well. He felt certain that the moment the branch was gnawed through, he would fall into the well and the snake would strike him. But, instead of trying to come out of the well, he went on taking on his tongue the

honey which was dripping from the tree at that time. Our life is just like this. We know that as each moment passes, our life-span is diminishing and we are approaching death, but being lost in worldly pleasures and enjoyments, we make no attempt to extricate ourselves from here.

(9) D A D H I C H I

Dadhichi was the grand-son of Brahmá and the son of the sage Atharva. When all the three worlds became terror-stricken by the tyranny of Vritrásur and even Indra was afraid of his prowess, he (Indra) went to Brahmá to seek his advice to save himself from Vritrásur's wrath. Brahmají replied "Vritrasur is a great devotee and has practised much penance. There is only one way of killing him. The great sage Dadhichi is engaged in penance in the forest named Naimisháranya. If, in a spirit of benevolence, he gives you the bones of his body and you make your weapon out of them, then only can you vanquish Vritrasur".

Indra went to the sage Dadhichi and begged of him that he might be pleased to give him (Indra) the bones of his body for the good of the three worlds. Thereupon, the sage sat down and was soon lost in a state of self-absorption. The wild cattle began to lick his body with their thorny tongues. As a result of continuous licking, the skin of the body soon disappeared. Indra then took out the sage's rib-bones and, with them, made a powerful weapon, called वज्र Bajra which means a weapon having the speed of lightning.

Indra had beheaded Dadhichi for imparting knowledge about Brahm to the Ashwini Kumárs. Thereupon, the Ashwini Kumars fixed a horse's head on Dadhichi's torso. This is how he has come to be known as Ashwashirá (one with the head of a horse). It was Maharshi Dadhichi's greatness that he should have helped with his own bones the same Indra who had behaved with him so shabbily.

(10) VALMIKI

His name was Ratnákar. He was born in a Brahman family of Angirá Gotra (descending from Angirá). He somehow fell in the company of Bhíls in his very boyhood, who brought him up and got him married in their own community. Robbing travellers was his means of livelihood. He would rob anybody he could find, and if anyone offered resistance, he would kill him. Thus for many years he remained engaged in this heinous and cruel deed.

Once the seven sages, Kashyap, Atrí, Bháradwáj, Vashishth, Gautam, Vishwá Mitra and Yama Dagní happened to pass through that area. Válmiki wanted to rob them. Moved to pity, the sages asked him "Why do you resort to such an evil deed?" His reply was "I have a large family and it has no other means of subsistence. It is my duty to maintain my family and if I do not rob others, what can it subsist upon?" The sages told him to go and ask the members of his family whether they would share the burden of the sin which he had been committing.

Válmiki had his suspicion that what the sages had told him was only a trick for them to escape from his clutches. Hence, he tied them to a tree and, going home, asked each one of his family members the question posed by the sages. All of them unequivocally told him that it was his duty and responsibility to feed them and it was no concern of theirs to know how the money was earned, and so, they could not share the burden of his sinful deeds.

Getting this kind of answer from those very persons for whose sake he was so cruelly robbing and killing travellers, Válmiki's inner eye opened. He went back to the forest forthwith and, after having released the sages, fell prostrate at their feet. He begged of their pardon and, with tears in his eyes, wanted to know from them the way he could do good to his soul. The sages initiated him and left. Válímki then

sat rooted at the same place and for thousands of years remained lost in the repetition of Nam. His entire body was covered by an ant-hill. An ant-hill is called Valmik. Since he once remained inside an ant-hill, he earned the appellation of Válmiki.

When Válmiki attained purification and perfection in every respect, he thought that he should sing the praise of the deity through whose grace all this was possible. As soon as he had this idea, Náradjí came and initiated him at God's command and unfolded to him, while he was engaged in Dhyan (meditation), the character and exploits of Ram and, following this revelation, Válmiki wrote Rámáyan in a crore of Shlokas (verses).

(11) G A U T A M

Maharshi Gautam is one of the seven sages. At some places of the Puráns (books of Hindu mythology) one finds the account that Maharshi Andha Tamá was born blind. Kám Dhenu* of heaven became pleased with him, and so, that "Gau" or cow rid him of all 'Tam' or darkness. Soon he got the power of sight. Since then, he came to be known as Gau Tam (one whose darkness has been dispelled by a cow).

Once Brahmá Ji wanted to create a very beautiful woman. With the beauty and grace gathered from all places, he brought into being a woman having a surpassingly beautiful figure, from the nails of the toes to the crown of the head and gave her the name अहल्या Ahalyá. अ A means not, हल 'Hal' means sin, हल्य 'Halya' denotes being sinful, and hence one who is sin-less, that is, without a blemish, is अहल्या 'Ahalyá'. She was the first woman on earth to possess such great beauty. All sages, gods, etc., wanted to win her. As for Indra, he even begged of Brahma Ji for her, but Brahmaji would not grant his prayer. During those days, the sage Gautam was practising great penance. Brahmaji entrusted

* A cow that fulfils all desires.

Ahalyá to him and she started staying in the sage's hermitage. But no evil thought ever crossed his mind.

After thousands of years, the sage Gautam himself took Ahalyá to Brahmáji and asked him to take back what he had left on trust. Finding this kind of self-control and pure attitude on the part of Gautam, Brahmáji was highly pleased with him and married Ahalyá to him.

When Indra, through his deceitful art, had succeeded in having intercourse with Ahalyá, Gautam, thinking that there was some connivance on the part of Ahalyá, too, cursed her that she would be turned into stone. Brahmáji then uttered the curse that, from that day, beauty and grace would not be confined to Ahalyá alone but it would be distributed amongst all the women of the world. He also cursed Indra that he would not occupy his position (as the king of gods) for ever but there would be a constant change of Indras. Then Gautam went to the Himalaya mountains to practise penance after severing his connection with his wife. When Ahalyá became purified by the touch of the holy feet of Ram Chandra, Gautam accepted her back.

(12) V Y Á S

Once Satya Vati who had a body-odour like that of a fish was ferrying across a river. The ascetic Paráshar chanced to come there and became attracted towards her. He asked her to satisfy his lust. Satya Vati pleaded "Sire ! Sages and ascetics are sitting on either bank of the river and they can see us, and so, how can I oblige you ?" At this, the ascetic Parashar invoked the power of his penance to create intense fog, due to which darkness pervaded all around. Satya Vati then again pleaded "Sire ! I am now a virgin. If I satisfy your lust, my virginity will be defiled and how can I remain with my own people thereafter ?" Parashar replied "Do not worry, you are not going to lose your virginity. You ask for a boon from me". Satya Vati said "May the fishy odour which at present emanates from my body be no longer there".

Parashar said "Let it be so", and from that time, Satya Vati's body began to give out a sweet aroma and she came to be known as Gandha Vati (The sweet-scented woman) or Yojan Gandhá. The ascetic Parashar then had intercourse with her, as a result of which she conceived leading to the birth of Vyás. Since Vyas was born on an island in the midst of a river and had a very dark complexion, he came to be known as Krishna Dwai Páyan.

He compiled the Vedas, divided them into different parts and edited them. It is said that he was also the author of eighteen Puráns, Mahá Bhárat, Bhágwat, Vedánt, etc.

(13) S H U K D E V

Maharshi Shuk Dev was the son of Ved Vyas. There are several stories about the way he was born. One of them is as follows :

Once Párvati wanted to have spiritual knowledge from Mahádev (Shiva). Mahadev said "It is something very secret ; first have a look round to be sure that no one else is within ear-shot". By chance, a rotten egg of a parrot was lying there. But it had no life in it, and so, Parvati made no mention of it to Mahadev. Mahadev told her "As I speak go on saying 'Yes', 'Yes'. And he then went on giving out spiritual secrets. After a little while Parvati fell asleep. By that time, the egg of the parrot had come to life as a result of drinking the nectar of the Lord's praise. Finding Parvati asleep it started saying 'Yes' to what Mahadev was narrating.

By listening to and imbibing the knowledge of the spiritual secrets, it became immortal. When Mahadev realised that Parvati was sleeping, he got infuriated and was about to kill the parrot, but the latter ran away and entered into the womb of the wife of Vyas. Twelve years later, it was born as Shukdev Maharaj.

Some nymphs were bathing in a tank. They did not care to cover themselves up before Shuk Dev Ji, but on see-

ing Vyas, they started putting on their clothes. Vyas asked them "How is it that seeing Shuk Dev, you continued to have your bath, but you came out of the water with clothes on when you saw me?" The nymphs replied "You can still know a man from a woman, but this is not so with your son Shuk Dev". On hearing this, Vyas was pleased with the greatness of his son and, at the same time, ashamed of his own weakness.

(14) S U D Á M Á

Sudámá was Shri Krishna's friend from his very childhood. Both studied together under Sándipani Jí in Ujjain. They were very fond of each other. After the completion of their studies, the two friends went back to their respective homes. Shri Krishna became a great king, while Sudama started living in a wretched cottage. Food was scarce at home and there was no dress worth the name to cover his body with. But both husband and wife would remain constantly engaged in Bhajan, leading a life of great purity and contentment.

Sudama used to very often tell his wife of his friendship of boyhood days with Sri Krishna. His eyes would be soaked with tears and he would be overpowered with emotion as soon as he remembered his dear friend. He used to narrate to his wife the delightful activities of his friend, and his wife, too, would be beside herself with joy on listening to them.

Once the Brahman family had nothing to eat for several days together. To the wife, it was very strange that one, whose friend was none other than Sri Krishna Chandra, the lord of the goddess, Lakshmi herself, should remain so poor and destitute. She wanted to tell her husband what she felt at heart but could not muster enough courage and checked herself for a while. But when her children again started crying for food, the mother's love surged forth and the poor Brahman woman could stand it no longer. In great humility, she submitted to her husband, "Please pay a visit

to Krishna Maharaj. You are suffering because of poverty. He will certainly give you wealth. My lord ! If he is so kind as to make a gift of even his own form to one who remembers him, how can anyone think that he will not bestow wealth on you who are his great devotee ? I know that you have not the slightest desire for wealth, but you should realize that no family can carry on without money. So, in my opinion, it would be right and proper for you to visit your friend Shri Krishna”.

Sudama retorted “What ! Do you want to send me to him for money ? Do you not know that a Brahman never has a craving for wealth ? His only duty is to remain engaged in Bhajan. If he feels hungry, he can certainly beg”.

The wife said “That is right, but here, you will get nothing even by begging. Please have a look at my tattered clothes and the faces of the children crying of hunger. I do not want wealth and I do not ask you to go to him and beg for a kingdom or the goddess Lakshmi. You only go and meet him once”.

Sudama at first tried his best not to accede to his wife’s request, but at last he agreed. However, how could he go with empty hands ? So, the wife brought some rice from one of her neighbours and, after having tied it in a dirty, tattered cloth, gave it to her husband to be offered as his Bhent to Shri Krishna.

Sudama reached Dwárká after many days. After several enquiries, he was able to reach the first gate of the palace. He told the gate-keeper that his friend, Shri Krishna, lived in that palace and he had come to meet his friend.

Hearing the stranger describe lord Shri Krishna as his “friend”, the gate-keeper was surprised and he had a feeling that the fellow had turned mad. Thinking it all over again, he came to the conclusion that since his master was, दोन बंधु Dín Bandhu or friend of the poor and the lowly, it was but natural that he should be the friend of this poor Brahman

So, the gatekeeper went inside and informed the master that a certain Brahman who appeared to be very poor and had only a small Dhoti and a tattered 'chaddar'* on, and was also bare-footed, was enquiring about him, and he said that his name was Sudama.

As soon as Shri Krishna heard the word "Sudama" he ran to Sudama in a great hurry, and, grasping his friend's feet with his hands, pressed them to his bosom. He then held his friend in his arms for a long time. Then, taking Sudama by his hand, Shri Krishna led him to his inner chamber and, after having him seated on a beautifully decorated bed-stead, enquired about his health and his family. In the mean time, Rukmani, Shri Krishna's consort, came there with all the paraphernalia for the worship of the honoured guest, and lord Krishna himself as well as Rukmani started washing Sudama's feet.

"You seem to be badly off like a beggar. Your feet are pierced by thorns. Alas, my friend ! You have suffered much pain and hardship and have come here after too long a time".

Seeing Sudama's wretched condition, the merciful lord shed tears. Not touching the water contained in the bowl, he washed the feet of his friend with the tears flowing from his eyes.

After washing Sudama's feet, lord Krishna wiped them with a yellow cloth and then worshipped Sudama in the proper manner. He then asked Sudama "Has not my sister-in-law given something for me, too ? It is not possible that you alone will be eating and I shall just look on". Hearing him, Sudama started trying to hide the bag of rice and lord Krishna, on his part, wanted to snatch it from him. The cloth in which the rice was tied was very old and worn out and it soon gave way with the result that all the rice fell on the ground. Lord Krishna picked up two handfuls of rice

* A sheet of cloth to cover the upper part of the body,

and partook of them, but as soon as he wanted to take a third handful, Rukmani caught hold of his hand, thinking that in exchange of two handfuls of rice taken by him, he had given Sudama all the wealth of both the worlds, and so, what was he going to give in exchange of a third handful ? Rukmani was afraid lest in lieu of a third handful, Lord Krishna might give her away, who was of the form of the goddess Lakshmi, as a gift.

Sudama stayed with Shri Krishna for some time. Shri Krishna looked after him with great care and attention. After enjoying great happiness and bliss, Sudama left for home. Shri Krishna accompanied his dear friend Sudama up to quite some distance and then, after paying him obeisance and reverential prayers, bade him farewell. But Shri Krishna gave no wealth to Sudama, nor did Sudama ask for any.

Sudama said to himself "After all, Shri Krishna has been brought up in a cow-herd's family and it matters little if he has now acquired a large kingdom and immense wealth. If he had given me something would his treasure-house become exhausted ? However, it is all very good that he did not give me anything. I shall now go and tell the woman who forcibly sent me to him that she should very carefully guard the immense wealth given as a gift by Krishna. However, on a second thought, he reconciled himself saying that perhaps the reason why Lord Krishna did not give him any wealth was that acquisition of wealth might prove to be an obstacle in the way of his performing the Lord's Bhajan.

While thinking and deliberating on these lines Sudama reached the neighbourhood of his village, to find that there stood a city thousand times more beautiful than Dwarka. He enquired of people whom he met on the way whose city it was and what was its name. The reply was that it was his own city and its name was Sudámápur. In the mean time, many servants and maid-servants came to him running. They instantly took him within the palace. His wife fell at

his feet. Seeing this gesture of mercy on the part of lord Krishna, Sudama became extremely sorry and repentful for the sarcastic thought he had entertained in his mind.

(15) D H R U V

King Uttán Pád had two queens whose names were Suniti and Suruchi. Dhruv was the son of Suniti who was the older of the two. The name of Suruchi's son was Uttam. King Uttan Pad was more attached to Suruchi.

One day the king was fondling Uttam taking him on his lap. Suruchi was sitting there and as she saw her son being fondled by the king so affectionately, her pride knew no bounds. In the mean time, the five year old Dhruv came there frolicing about that place and he also felt a desire to play on the lap of his father like his younger brother. But, for fear of Suruchi, the king refused to take him on his lap. Just then, Suruchi broke forth "My son, you are extremely unlucky, for, instead of being born of me, you were given birth by Suniti. You should now go and worship God so that in your next life you may be born of me and you can then fulfil your desire to play on the lap of the king". Dhruv felt very miserable on hearing this from his step-mother and, on going to his mother, started weeping bitterly. His mother too began to lament her lot and told him "What your step-mother said is quite true, and if you do worship God, your desire is sure to be fulfilled. You should therefore, engage yourself in the worship of God.

And so, Dhruv left home, but the five year old child had no idea as to where and how he could meet God. On his way, he met Nárad. Placing his hand on Dhruv's head, Narad initiated him. Dhruv went to Mathurá and started worshipping God. He undertook a prolonged fast and practised great penance. God, being pleased, appeared before Dhruv and ordered him to go back to his father and, there rule as the king of kings and at the same time remain engaged in devotional practices,

Dhruv was enthroned as king by Uttan Pad, who then went to the forest to worship God. Dhruv's younger brother, Uttam, was one day killed by Kuber's followers. Dhruv, thereupon, attacked Kuber and killed one lakh and eighty thousand of his followers. Kuber begged to be pardoned for the wrong he had done. Thereafter, Dhruv went to Dhruv Lok (world of Dhruv) with his father and two mothers.

(16) R I S H A B H D E V

The name of his father was Nábhi and that of his mother Merú Deví. Marks representing the weapon बज्र Bajra (thunder) and spear could be seen on the soles of the child Rishabh's feet from his very birth. And as he grew in age, such qualities as equanimity, composure, renunciation and charity began to develop in him. He had also no equal in shapeliness of body, grace, brilliance, strength, personality and beauty. And so, his father gave him the name of Rishabh (the most excellent one).

On Rishabh Dev's becoming an adult, Nabhi installed him as the king and left for the forest with his wife to practise penance. Rishabh married a girl called Jayantí presented by Indra as a gift, and he had one hundred sons by her. The eldest amongst them was Bharat and it is after him that this country has come to be known as Bhárat-Varsh.

Once he went to the region called Brahmá Vart and, at a congregation of Brahm-Rishis (sages possessing knowledge about the secrets of Brahm) and before all his subjects, he gave out the secrets of attaining salvation to his sons and also advised them to perform the Sewa (service) of their eldest brother Bharat, adding that by so doing, they would be performing his own Sewa and ensuring the welfare and prosperity of their subjects. Thereafter, he entrusted the responsibility of ruling the kingdom to Bharat and, giving up everything, started wandering aimlessly stark naked and with long shabby hair, like a mad man. In his wanderings, he would be confronted by wicked persons who would shout at

him, tell him harsh words, pass urine on his body, throw human excrement and dust on him, spit at him, hurl abuses on him and torment him in many other ways but Rishabh Dev would not be at all perturbed by all these painful experiences.

Some time after, he adopted "Ajgar-Vrat" (the vow to go through the fruits of one's Prárabdh Karmas after confining oneself to a particular spot. He would eat, make water and ease himself lying. As a result of this, there would be urine and stools all over his body, but his urine and excrement gave out a sweet aroma. Some of these days, he would walk as a cow or a deer or a crow, and eat, drink, pass urine and ease himself, standing or sitting or lying down.

Rishabh Dev acquired many supernatural powers but he would not care for them at all. At the end, in the forest in which he used to roam about stark-naked and with shabby hair, a fire broke out by the heat generated by the friction between several bamboo pieces swayed by powerful winds, and Rishabh Dev's body and the entire forest were soon reduced to ashes.

(17) B H A R A T

He was the eldest son of Rishabh Dev. It is after him that our country has been called Bhárat Khand or Bhárat Varsh. One day when king Bharat was engaged in the repetition of Nam sitting on a river-bank, a female deer came there to drink water. As soon as she started drinking, a lion's roar was heard. Getting frightened, she jumped across the river, to the other bank, but as she did that, the young one was ejected from her womb, and she, too, died in a cave she had got into for shelter. Seeing this, king Bharat's heart was filled with pity and compassion. He picked the young deer out of the river and, taking it to his hermitage, started bringing it up. Slowly and gradually he developed a strong attachment towards the young deer, so much so that

he gave up attending to all religious observances and spiritual practices. One day the young deer strayed far and did not return. The Rajarshi* became very much upset and remained engrossed in the thought of the young deer. The result ultimately was that he left his mortal coil while engaged in the thought of the animal. In accordance with the saying that the desire lurking at the time of one's death, determines one's location in the life after". Bharat assumed the form of a deer in his next life. The memory of his past life, however, remained alive in him. He repented having wasted the precious human life because of his attachment to a deer. He now became very careful.

(18) R A N T I D E V

Amongst kings who were the descendants of Raghu, emperor Ranti Dev was a great devotee who gave away the income of his entire kingdom to the poor and the needy. He emptied his entire treasury so much so that he became penni-less. When the lord tests his devotee, he is put to great hardship and misery. Famine broke out in Ranti Dev's kingdom. He had not even one morsel of food for him. Taking the whole family with him, he started wandering in the forest. Forty-eight days passed without their having anything to eat. On the forty-ninth day, a little food was available. When, after remembering God, they were about to eat, a certain Brahman made his appearance there and asked for food. The king gave him his own share. Thereafter, a Shudra (one belonging to a low caste) came to whom the queen's share was given. All the food was thus exhausted and only some drinking water was left. However, in the mean time a Chándál** appeared on the scene and told the king that he was very thirsty. And so, the Chandal drank all the water.

* Sage-king

** A person whose profession is to attend the funeral at the crematorium. He is regarded as untouchable.

Actually, those three were Lord Vishnu, Brahmá and Mahádev, in the guise of the Brahman, the Shudra and the Chandal, respectively. Seeing such great forbearance on the part of king Ranti Dev, they were highly pleased and ordered him to ask for some boon. The king submitted, in all humility, "I do not want anything save your Bhakti (Devotion). Grant me that Bhakti. The second boon that I would pray for is this : The whole world is steeped in all kinds of pain and misery, and I wish you to transfer all the pain and suffering to me and distribute to all whatever happiness has fallen to my lot".

(19) S H I B I

King Shibi was very kind hearted and highly religious minded. All the time, he used to remain engaged in the practice of devotion to God. Indra was afraid lest he should snatch away from him his throne. And so to test his Dharma or standard of virtue and morality, Indra sent to him Fire in the garb of falcon and Dharma (god of virtue and morality) himself in the guise of a pigeon.

One day while king Shibi was resting in the private apartment of his palace, a pigeon came and fell on his lap. The pigeon was very much frightened and was actually trembling in fear. Finding shelter in king Shibi's lap, it hid itself there as a frightened child does in his mother's lap. Soon a falcon appeared on the scene, following the pigeon. The falcon said "O King, this pigeon is my food, and so, please leave it".

Said the king "It has taken my refuge. It is a great sin to disown one who has taken refuge. I cannot leave it".

The falcon retorted "O king, you are very religious minded. Just as it is your duty to protect the pigeon, so also to give me my food, hungry that I am, is also your duty. This pigeon is my food. In demanding it from you, I am not committing any sin. So, you please let it off and save me from the misery of hunger".

King Shibi replied "If you really want your hunger to be satisfied, I shall get for you as much flesh as you want and, that too, from the person of anybody you wish. You eat to your fill but leave this pigeon to me". The falcon argued, "That is my choice. I would like to have its fresh meat only. It is my practice to bite off bits of flesh from a living being and eat them".

When the falcon did not agree in spite of a lot of persuasion, the king said "All right. You will admit that my flesh is very pure and I am also a living being. I hope, therefore, you will be satisfied if I give you flesh from my own body of the same weight as this pigeon's".

The falcon replied "That will do. You get a weighing balance. Cut out the flesh from your own body and give it to me after weighing it against the pigeon".

The king immediately took the pigeon on one pan of the balance and, on the other pan, started placing bits of flesh which he slashed from his own body. The more flesh he put on the balance, the heavier the pigeon became. The king, on his part, went on slashing more and more flesh from his body without hesitating in the least and putting it on the pan of the balance. When all the flesh of his body had been taken out and yet the pigeon weighed heavier, the king, with the sword in hand, was about to sever his head from his body. At that very moment, Dharma (The god of virtue and morality), who was in the guise of the pigeon, appeared in person before him and said "Oh king ! I am Dharma himself and this is Fire in the garb of falcon. We two came here to test your Dharma (virtue and morality). True to your fame, you excel in virtue and morality and we are very pleased with you".

The king Shibi was true to his Dharma (duty) and Dharma too, saved him and his honour.

(20) BHAGIRATH

Bhagirath was the son of king Dilip and a very powerful king himself. His subjects used to enjoy alround happiness.

He always cherished the desire to bring the river Gangá on the earth and thereby emancipate his fore-fathers. One day he entrusted the responsibility of ruling his kingdom to his ministers and went to the forest to engage in penance. Being pleased with the great penance he performed at the place called Gokarna, Brahmá ordered him to ask for a boon. Bhagirath, thereupon, prayed "May my forefathers get two handfuls of Ganga-water and may Gangaji come down on the earth and sprinkle her holy waters on their ashes so that they may attain salvation". Brahmá replied "Ganga will certainly descend on earth but, to withstand the tremendous force of her current, you should worship Mahádev (Shiva) and invoke his help". Hearing this, Bhagirath worshipped Shiva for one whole year, standing all the time on his toe. Shiva was very much pleased and he agreed to receive the impact of the falling current of Ganga.

Shiva got ready with his locked hair hanging. Ganga started descending on his head with great force. Gangaji was actually thinking that by her strong current she would wash away Shiva and carry him down to the nether region. Reading her mind, Shiva became very angry and hid Ganga in his locks. In spite of trying her best, Gangaji could not extricate herself from there. Bhagirath, thereupon, prayed to Shiva, and it was then only that Shiva would relax Ganga. This is how Gangaji came to have seven streams, out of which only one followed Bhagirath (to the earth).

(21) A M B A R Í S H

Once king Ambarish undertook Ekádashi* fast for one whole year. On the day following the last Ekádashi day, he fed Brahmans after a due observance of all the usual rites. Thereafter, the king was about to break his fast but, at that very time, the sage Durvásá appeared before him with his disciples. The king received Durvásá very warmly and then begged of him to have food. The sage agreed and went to

* Fast observed on the eleventh day after new moon or full moon,

the bank of the river Yamuna to attend to his daily routine. There was only one "Ghari"* left for Dwádashi** to be over. The fast becomes infructuous if it is not broken on the Dwádashi day. Obtaining the permission of Brahmans, the king broke his fast with the water sanctified by the holy feet of Shri Hari (God) and kept his gaze fixed on the way by which Durvásá would come back, so that he could then feed him.

Durvasa returned after finishing his daily routine, and on coming to know that the king had already broken his fast, he got infuriated. "After inviting me as his guest, this man had his own food before feeding me. Just now shall I make him taste the fruit of this insolence". So saying, he plucked his locked hair from his head and dashed it on the ground, whereupon, a demoness called Kritiyá who looked like hell-fire appeared on the scene and rushed towards the king. But Ambarish, who had a firm faith in God, stood his ground undaunted and unperturbed. Kritiya had hardly reached Ambarish when lord Vishnu's Sudarshan Chakra (a wheel-shaped weapon called Sudarshan) reduced her to ashes. The 'Chakra' was then after the sage Durvasa, ready to strike him down. Frightened and totally unnerved, he ran away to save his life. But the 'Chakra' followed him.

Durvasa ran for shelter in all directions and to all the fourteen worlds but he found no place of safety. Finally he fell at the holy feet of Lord Vishnu and prayed that he might be forgiven for the wrong that he had done to Ambrish. Lord Vishnu said, "I am always moved by the devotion of my devotee. Devotees are my heart and I reside in their hearts. If you want to save yourself, go to king Ambarish and beg of him to forgive you". Hearing Lord Vishnu's command, Durvasa proceeded back.

Ambarish fell in a very embarrassing position. He thought that the sage Durvasa had to leave hungry and it

* The space of twenty four minutes.

** Twelfth day after new moon or full moon.

was because of himself that the sage had to run for saving his life and so, in a situation like this, he (Ambarish) had no right to take food. Indeed, from that very moment, the king gave up taking any food and would drink only water. It took one whole year for Durvasa to return, but Ambarish remained steady in his vow of fast.

Immediately on coming back, Durvasa fell at the king's feet. The king, on his part, humbly besought "Sudarshan Chakra" to calm down so that the sage might be saved.

Sudarshan was pacified. While blessing the king, Durvasa said "To-day I realize the greatness of God's devotees. Though I did you so much wrong, you only tried to do good to me".

(22) VIDUR AND HIS WIFE

Vidur was born of a maidservant. He had to be born on this earth because of a curse uttered by the sage Mándavya. He was a brother of Dhrita Ráshtra and Pándu. Being the son of a maid-servant, he could not claim the throne.

When Lord Krishna went to Hastinápura to act as a mediator between Kauravas and Pándavas in their fight for the throne, Duryodhan, proud of his wealth, did not agree to the peace proposals put forward by Lord Krishna, but, for courtesy's sake, he nevertheless invited Krishna to dinner. Krishna replied "One can have food in another person's house on three grounds : (a) Because of one's poverty and destitution ; (b) because of one's bond of friendship and love ; (c) because of the host's devotion to God. But, in this case, none of these grounds exists". So saying, he went to Vidur's house.

Vidur was not at home then. His wife was taking bath. When she heard that Lord Krishna had come, she was beside herself with joy, and she became so lost in love and bliss that she unhesitatingly ran towards Krishna without caring to cover herself. Lord Krishna, who is the protector of the

honour of his devotees, wondered at the condition of her intense love, and he quickly covered her body with his Pitámbar (yellow cloth).

She then took Lord Krishna to her apartment and after having him seated on a throne, became overcome with love and bliss. Lord Krishna told her that if there was anything to eat, she should bring it for him. She brought some plantains, and made Krishna partake of them while she sat by his side. Lost that she was in love and bliss, she threw the kernel of the fruit on the ground and gave Lord Krishna only the skin to eat. The Lord, indeed is fond of love alone, and he started eating the plantain skin with relish.

Vidur came in the meantime and seeing what was going on, took his wife to task saying "You foolish woman, you are giving Krishna the skin to eat instead of the kernel". Vidur then took his seat by Lord Krishna's side and started giving him the kernel to eat after peeling off the skin. Lord Krishna observed "Vidur ! The kernel of the plantain is, of course, very sweet but it cannot match that skin in taste".

By this utterance, Lord Krishna is teaching his devotees the lesson that in his Darbar (court), cleverness and trickery are of no avail and it is only love that pleases him.

(23) U D D H A V

Uddhavji was a friend and devotee of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna used to regard Uddhavji as his counsellor, an intimate friend and a near relation. Even then, Uddhavji always used to perform Lord Krishna's Sewa as his servant and slave.

When Uddhavji realized that Lord Krishna now wanted to bring the chapter of his life in this world to a close, he met Krishna in private and most humbly submitted to him "Oh Lord, I do not like to be separated from Thy holy feet even for a moment. Takest me, too, with Thee".

Lord Krishna, thereupon, said "I am leaving this world physically. You will have to practise Yoga and then only will you be entitled to find location in my (true) region". In short, without the practice of Yoga, the way to salvation will not open. External formalities and observances do not confer salvation.

(24) M A Y U R D H W A J

Emperor Mayur Dhvaj of Ratnápura was a highly religious minded person and a great devotee towards the end of the Dwápara Yuga. Once the horse of his Ashwa Medh Yagya (Yagya in which a horse is sacrificed) was moving from country to country guarded by his warrior son, Támara Dhvaj, his prime minister and his soldiers. Those very days, the Ashwa Medh Yagya of king Yudhisthir was also going on. The great hero Arjun and Lord Krishna himself were guarding his horse.

Since Lord Krishna was his charioteer and since he had been victorious in battles against many well-known warriors, some pride and conceit used to lurk in Arjun's heart and it is possible that this was the reason why Lord Krishna created this episode. In the battle that followed, Támara Dhvaj was victorious. Making both Krishna and Arjun senseless, Támara Dhvaj took their horse and went to his father to whom he described all that had happened. King Mayur Dhvaj expressed great regret over the incident and said "It is not at all my intention to seize their horse or to complete my Yagya, forgetting Lord Krishna and not inviting him here. You are not my son but my enemy since even after meeting Lord Krishna, you came away leaving him there".

In the mean time, Arjun regained consciousness and became very restless for the horse. Lord Krishna put on the garb of an old Brahman and, with Arjun posing as his son, went with him to the sacrificial ground where King Mayur Dhvaj had been performing Yagya. The King wanted to

know the object of his visit. After making the king vow to grant him whatever he wanted, Lord Krishna in the guise of the Brahman, told him "There is a lion in the forest who wanted to devour this boy. I pleaded with him a lot to devour me instead of this boy, but he would not agree, saying that I was too old and my meat was no good at all. As a result of my fervent prayers and weeping, he decided that he could let my son go only on the condition that king Mayur Dhvaj, in all happiness and cheerfulness, would agree to hand over to him (lion) half of his body after getting himself sawed into two by his wife and son themselves. Oh king ! It is for this reason that I have come to you. Therefore, save this boy if you can".

The king thought that his body was sure to perish one day, and so, if it could serve the Brahman's purpose, nothing else would be better. The Brahman added "The lion has laid down another condition and that is that one end of the saw with which the king is to be cut in two should be in the hands of the king's eldest son and the other end should be held by his queen". The king very gladly agreed to abide by this condition, too.

There was a great commotion in the king's court. The courtiers murmured their disapproval, but king Mayur Dhvaj dissuaded them from trying to intervene in the matter saying that those who really loved him and wished him well should not at all think in those terms. Tamra Dhvaj told the Brahman that according to Shastras (scriptures) the son represents the father, and so, it would be all right if half of his body were accepted instead of that of his father. The Brahman's curt reply was "You are not the king." The queen then argued "I am, according to a well-established principle, half the king's body, and so, if you take me instead of half of his body, the lion will be all the more happy and satisfied." The Brahman retorted "You are the king's wife and not the king himself."

The Brahman then made Tamra Dhvaj take his stand

in front of the king with the idea that, seeing him, the king might be seized with infatuation, and he then made the queen stand at the king's back. With the saw resting on the king's head, they started driving it. When the saw came down to the level of the king's nose, some tears trickled down his left-eye. At this, the Brahman lost his temper and was about to leave saying that he would not accept anything offered to him with remorse and regret. The king thereupon humbly submitted, "Respected Sire ! Tears are coming down the left eye because the part of the body on that side is sad because it is not going to be of any use, while on the other hand, the right side of the body is extremely lucky as it is going to be of service to the Brahman."

On seeing this pure and unsullied attitude of devotion on the part of his very dear devotee, Mayur Dhvaj, the Lord now disclosed his identity and asked Mayur Dhvaj to seek a boon. With folded hands, the king submitted "O thou merciful Lord ! Now that thou hath been kind to me, what else remains for me to seek from thee ? I only pray that thou mayest grant me love for thy lotus feet. My another prayer is that in future, in Kali Yug, thou mayest refrain from testing thy devotees in this manner". The Lord was pleased to grant his prayers.

Arjun, who was a witness to this episode, fell at Mayur Dhvaj's feet and, admitting before him his own pride and conceit, told him that the purpose of this chain of events planned by the Lord was to shatter his (Arjun's) pride.

(25) P A R I K S H I T

Parikshit was the grand-son of Arjun and the son of Abhi Manyu. In his childhood, he would not play with toys. Even while playing, he would imitate some of the exploits of Lord Krishna or worship him.

The Pandavas handed over their kingdom to him and started on their journey to heaven. All were happy under his rule. One day he realized that Kali had made his entry into

his kingdom, i. e., Kali Yug had begun during his regime. He left in search for him (Kali). At one place, he found a Shudra (person of low caste) belabouring a cow and an ox with a club. Three legs of the ox had already been broken, and only one was left. On enquiry, he came to know that the ox was Dharma (god of virtue and morality), the cow was the earth, and the Shudra was Kali. He raised his sword to strike down Kali but the latter fell at his feet and started imploring him to spare his life. At this, King Parikshit was moved to pity and allowed him to find his place with gambling, wine, woman, violence, gold, etc. for with these accompany falsehood, ego, pride, impurity, cruelty, etc.

One day king Parikshit went out for hunting. Overcome with fatigue and thirst, he went to the hermitage of a sage who was, however, lost in meditation then, and the king's prayers failed to arouse him from his meditation. At that very moment, Kali got hold of King Parikshit, for there was gold in his crown. In a fit of anger, Parikshit lost his balance and put a dead snake round the neck of the meditating sage. He then returned to his capital. Later on, thinking over the matter, he started repenting and made up his mind to take the punishment for the wrong he had done.

On the other side, when the son of the sage came to know of what had happened, he got infuriated and uttered the curse "On the seventh day from hence, Parikshit will be bitten by a Takshak snake", and he sent a message to this effect to the king.

The king, on his part, handed over his kingdom to his son, Janmejaya, and settled on the bank of the river Ganges as a recluse. Soon, many Maharshis (great sages) and Devarishis (god-sages) assembled there. On Parikshit's asking him some questions, Shuk Dev Ji narrated before him the teachings of Bhagwat. King Parikshit went on listening to him for seven days without any break. At the end he passed on into a state of self-absorption. The snake Takshak

did strike him on the appointed day, but he had already got himself detached from his body.

(26) A J Á M I L

Ajámil was a Brahman in his previous life and he used to practise penance in forests then. At the time of his death, he had been absorbed in the thought of a Chándálí (an untouchable woman according to Hindu custom). So, though born in a Brahman family in this life, he used to engage in sinful deeds from the very beginning. He became enamoured of a harlot and started living with her.

Once some devotees came to his house. Ajamil extended a warm hospitality to them and, after making a clean breast of his evil deeds before them, he touched their feet. The devotees, while leaving, told him that he should give the name Narayan to his next child when he was born. Ajamil did as advised by them. He used to be very fond of his son Narayan.

When Yama's aides came to him at the time of his death and started tormenting him, he called out "Oh Narayan". Hardly had he uttered this, that Lord Narayan's guards appeared on the scene and drove away Yama's messengers, beating them up. They then took Ajamil to Baikunth (heaven).

Yama's aides went back to him and said "Ajamil was a great sinner ; he called out for his son and not for Lord Narayan. How is it, then, that the Lord's guards drove us away and took Ajamil to Baikunth" ? King Yama silenced them by saying, "If he could take the Lord's name while dying, what else remained for him to do by way of religious worship or observance of rituals" ?

(27) S H A B A R Í

The Bhíl tribe is called "Shabar". Shabari's father was the king (chief) of Bhíls. When Shabari attained marriageable age, her father fixed her marriage with a young Bhil,

The day of marriage drew near. Hundreds of goats and buffaloes were brought for sacrifice. Young Shabari, who was a devotee, was bewildered, being at a loss to know what sort of a marriage it was that, for its sake, so many animals were going to be killed. It would be better not to marry at all than be a party to this kind of marriage. At dead of night, she came out quietly from her room on tip-toes and ran away towards the forest.

Two days after, she reached a lake called Pampá in Dandakáranya (forest named after Dandak). The day was breaking. Maharshi (the great sage) Matang and his disciples had come there for taking bath. After explaining to his disciples what true religion was, Maharshi Matang was exhorting them to be kind and compassionate towards all Jivas (living beings). The philosophy expounded by the Maharshi and his instructions produced a unique and profound effect on Shabari and she decided to remain there. But she was an untouchable. Thinking that her stay in the midst of the sages would defile their penance, she built a small cottage for herself at some distance from where they stayed and became whole-heartedly engaged in the Sewa of the Sadhus.

At night, she would quietly go with bundles of dry twigs and leave them in the hermitage of the sages. She would also sweep their way to the Ghát (bathing ground). This was her daily routine. The sages were at a loss to know who that person could be who did this Sewa unnoticed. The disciples then kept a watch. Shabari was caught and taken before the sage Matang.

Shabari started trembling with fear. The other sages thought that, after all, Shabari belonged to a low caste and there was no knowing what kind of sin they had committed by making use of the twigs brought by her. But sage Matang, who was well aware of the greatness of devotees, thought that this Shabari was so pure and holy that the Dharma

(religious worship) and Karma (religious observances) of crores of Brahmans deserved to be sacrificed before her. He told his disciples that caste was no bar for cultivation of devotion to God and, indeed, Shabari was a great devotee of the Lord. The disciples started looking at one another's faces. Maharshi Matang told Shabari that she should stay by the side of his cottage and that he would get a cottage built for her.

When it was time for sage Matang to depart from this world, he told Shabari "I am pleased with your devotion. The Lord Ram Chandra will come to your cottage in person and give you Darshan". Though Shabari was very much aggrieved because of separation from her Guru, she continued to practise Bhajan and Dhyān regularly, happy and pleased with the prospect of getting Ram Chandra Ji's Darshan.

Shabari used to sweep the path-way by which the sages used to go to the Ghāt (bathing ground) for taking their daily bath. One day she was late. One of the sages became very angry on seeing her and, in that fit of rage, his garment somehow happened to touch Shabari's body. This further infuriated him and he left for taking his bath after hurling some harsh and low words on Shabari. But, reaching the lake, he found that instead of water, it was all blood and, that too, full of worms. Seeing this, he thought that the water of the lake had been defiled because of Shabari's impurity.

Lord Ram Chandra had incarnated himself in Ayodhyā city, he had been exiled to the forests because of Kaikeyi, his step-mother, and he was coming to the Dandak forest in the company of Sítā and Lakshman,.....all this news had already spread far and wide. Shabari, too, had come to know of it. What doubts could there be now that she would soon be having Lord Ram Chandra's Darshan, the more so as the sage Matang had foretold her that Ram Chandrajī would himself come to her. Each day, thinking that the Lord was sure to come on that very day, Shabari would sweep a long stretch of the path-way by which he would come, sprinkle

water on it and plaster the ground with cow-dung paste. Going to the forest, she would pluck ripe plums from the trees and would first taste them herself to make sure they were sweet. She would throw away the sour ones. Then, going to the path-way, she would keep looking in the direction by which the Lord would be coming. When the thought of her own ugliness and low caste flashed into her mind, she would hide herself in some bush and, on the other hand, when she would recall sage Matang's prediction and think of the Lord's mercy and "Patit Páwantá" (attribute of purifying the fallen ones), she would rush forward to receive him. She would thus remain lost in the love and remembrance of the Lord day and night. Twelve years passed in this manner. Confident that what the Guru had said could not be wrong and thinking that if the Lord did not come today, he might come the next day, she never gave up hope. The ascetics and sages on the other hand, were quite complacent. Some of them said to themselves "When the Lord comes, he would want to know who is the greatest. All would then mention my name, and hence, the Lord is sure to come to my hermitage". In like manner, some were proud of their high lineage, others of their incomparable learning and still others of their superior wisdom.

Lord Ram Chandra ultimately came. He went straight to Shabari's cottage, without taking any notice of the hermitages of the other sages. Shabari's joy knew no bounds. Falling prostrate before Ram Chandrajī, she paid obeisance to him. Rushing towards her, he raised her up from the ground. All her sufferings and sorrows because of separation from the Lord were instantly removed. Her condition then was like a 'Chakor' looking intently at the moon-like countenance of the Lord. Lost in the bliss of his Darshan, she started shedding tears of joy. She offered him the plums she had collected from the forest. Ram Chandrajī started eating them.

Ram Chandrajī then explained to her the nine kinds of Bhakti (devotion) as follows ;

Bhakti consists, firstly, in associating with Sants; secondly, in listening to discourses and recitations in my praise; thirdly, in worshipping the lotus feet of the Guru without any ego; fourthly, in singing my praise without the slightest element of hypocrisy; fifthly, in repeating my name with firm faith and in practising Bhajan as prescribed by the Vedas; sixthly, in cultivating self-control, peace of mind, and renunciation, and in engaging in virtuous deeds at all times; seventhly, in realizing my presence in everything, especially in Sants; eighthly, in being contented with whatever one has got and in not finding faults with others even in dream; ninthly, in being simple, straightforward and art-less in one's dealings with others, and in not being complascent because of confidence that protection is being vouchsafed by me.

By explaining to Shabari the nine ways of performing Bhakti, Ram Chandraji enriched her.

On coming to learn that Ram Chandraji had come to Shabari's cottage, the sages were all very much surprised, and when he had finished eating at Shabari's place, they all came there to have his Darshan, giving up their pride of high lineage and Dharma and Karma. At the end of their conversation with Ram Chandraji, they related to him how the water in the lake had become impure, and enquired of him of the way of getting it purified again. Ram Chandraji said, that as soon as Shabari dips her feet in the water, it shall become transparent and pure. The sages then humbly and respectfully took Shabari to the lake and as soon as the holy feet of this great devotee touched the water, it became pure and clear.

Ram Chandraji then bid Shabari farewell, and asked her to go on cultivating Bhakti in accordance with the instructions he had given her. Shabari could not bear separation from him, and she left her mortal coil as soon as he left,

(28) S W A P A C H

When Yudhisthir performed the Rajsúya Yagya (a great sacrifice or religious ceremony performed at the coronation of a supreme sovereign or universal monarch by the king himself and his tributary princes), he asked lord Sri Krishna what would be the test by which it would be ascertained that the Yagya was successful and complete. Lord Krishna's reply was that he should consider the Yagya to be perfect and successful if the bell started ringing by itself. Persons of all rank and position had assembled for the Yagya...., Brahmans, scholars, sages, ascetics, and kings as well as paupers (tramps). King Yudhisthir received and treated them all with due honour and respect, fed them sumptuously, and tried to satisfy them in every possible way, but even then, the bell would not ring. He then asked Lord Sri Krishna what the reason could be. Sri Krishna said that no devotee seemed to have been invited to grace the occasion.

King Yudhisthir thereupon submitted "O lord, sages and Brahmans from all the regions are here and is it possible that none amongst them is a true devotee?" Lord Shri Krishna said that this question should be put to all those present. The king, accordingly, asked each one of them. In reply, some described themselves as scholars, some as reciters of the Vedas, others as worshippers of Brahm, still others as practitioners of rites and rituals, and so on, but not even one amongst them said that he worshipped God and was his devotee.

King Yudhisthir, Draupadi, Arjun and others then prayed to lord Krishna that he himself might be pleased to mention the name of his devotee, at which, Sri Krishna took the name of Swapach. Arjun, Bhím and other brothers of Yudhisthir thereupon went to Swapach's place and entreated him to come with them. Swapach would not agree at first but, knowing it to be lord Krishna's wish, he ultimately did accompany them to the venue of Yagya,

King Yudhisthir and Sri Krishna received him very warmly and respectfully offered him a seat. Draupdi herself brought for him a plate-ful of delicious food. When he partook of the food, the bell rang, but only slightly. Being asked why the bell rang only a little, lord Krishna said that this question should be put to Draupadi. With folded hands, Draupadi submitted "It is truly my fault. Swapachji partook of the food after mixing all the different items (preparations) I had brought for him. I did not like this and said to myself that this person must be totally ignorant of the tastes of the various dishes, and that is why he mixed them all before eating them". Lord Krishna thereupon said that, in future, none should, even by mistake, speak ill of devotees and find faults with them.

Afterwards, when Swapach was fed with a pure heart and in an attitude of faith in the greatness of a devotee, the bell rang loudly and clearly, and the Yagya was successfully completed.

(29) GAJENDRA (THE KING ELEPHANT)

In his previous life, he was a religious minded king and it was as the result of a curse that he assumed the form of an elephant in his next life.

The king elephant was the lord of a herd of cow-elephants. They used to inhabit the region adjoining the peaks of the Trikút mountain. At that place, there was a very beautiful lake full of transparent and nicely cool water.

One day when the king-elephant went to drink water in that lake accompanied by his herd of cow-elephants, a crocodile caught hold of one of his legs. The king-elephant tried to extricate his leg from the jaws of the crocodile using all his strength and energy, but the crocodile held his leg so firmly between its jaws that he could not even move his leg at all. The crocodile was forcibly dragging him into the water and he, on his part, was trying to pull himself out.

Thus, a tug-of-war went on between the two. At times, the crocodile succeeded in dragging him a little further into the water, while at other times, he would be able to pull the crocodile in his direction a little bit. The king-elephant, however, could not free himself from the crocodile's jaws. The cow-elephants then left sad and dejected, unable to offer him any help. Though the king had the strength of a thousand elephants, all that was of no use to him now. Fatigue was gradually overtaking him, and his physical strength was vanishing fast. Slowly and gradually, he began to realize that only God's mercy can save him. He became convinced that physical strength was really of no avail ultimately. With this conviction and with the memory retained of his past life to guide him, he reposed complete trust on the Lord and started repeating his name. He gave up depending on his own strength, and dedicated himself completely to the Lord's holy feet. Holding a lotus flower with his trunk, he started remembering the Lord and praying for succour from him.

No sooner than the Lord had heard the king-elephant's piteous cry that he, seated on Garud, rushed to the king's aid whirling the "Chakra" in his hand. He hurled the Chakra on the crocodile's mouth cutting it into two and the king-elephant was thus freed from the crocodile's strangle-hold. Meeting with death at the hands of the Lord himself, the crocodile attained salvation. The king-elephant also ultimately found location in the Lord's region.

(30) R O M H A R S H A N "S Ú T"

Rom Harshan was a "Sút", that is, belonged to a mixed caste. He was a favourite disciple of Ved Vyás. He was taught all the Puranas (Hindu mythologies) by Vyás Dev who blessed him that he would be an elucidator of all the Puranas. Rom Harshan used to visit the hermitages of all sages and deliver discourses on the Puranas before them. "Sút" Ji gave elucidations of the Puranas before eighty thous-

and sages who lived in "Naimisháranya" (the forest named after Neemish).

(31) P R A H L Á D

The demon-king Hiranya Kashipu had four sons. Prahlád was the youngest amongst them, but in devotion to God and other good qualities, he excelled them all. Prahlad's father, who was the king of demons, used to have frequent quarrels with the gods. With the object of vanquishing them, Hiranya Kashipu once embarked on a great penance. He became completely oblivious of his body. Indra seized this opportunity of launching an attack on the demons. He drove away the demons, ransacked Hiranya Kashipu's palace and forcibly took away Prahlad's mother with him. Prahlad was in his mother's womb those days. Indra met Nárad on the way who took him (Indra) severely to task. Indra said that when the child whom the woman had conceived through Hiranya Kashipu was born, he would kill him (the child) and then set her free. Narad replied that the child in the woman's womb would be a great devotee from whom Indra had nothing to fear and he should therefore, let her go. Indra, accordingly, set her free.

Narad then took her to his own hermitage. With a view to consoling her, he used to describe before her the noble qualities and activities of the Lord. In this way, Prahlad, even while in his mother's womb, acquired all Gyán (knowledge) concerning Bhakti (devotion). Actually, it was for the sake of Prahlad that all these instructions on Gyan had been imparted. Later on, on Hiranya Kashipu's return, Prahlad's mother was again back home where Prahlad was born in due course.

When Prahlad attained the age of five, Hiranya Kashipu sent Prahlad to a teacher for lessons and study. But Prahlad had already become conversant with all the Shástras (scriptures) while in his mother's womb. The teacher would try to teach one thing and he, on the other hand, would be preparing lessons on devotion to God. One day Prahlad's father

asked him what was the best thing he had learnt till then. Prahlad thereupon said "The best lesson that one can learn is that one should give up all these deceitful trivialities and engage in devotion to God as early as possible". Hearing his own son talking of devotion to God, Hiranya Kashipu got infuriated and rushed towards him to kill him. The king's courtiers somehow pacified him and made him let Prahlad go. Hiranya Kashipu let his son go after warning him that he should never again mention the name of Vishnu who was his (Hiranya Kashipu's) arch enemy.

Prahlad, on the other hand, continued to sing the praise of Lord Vishnu with renewed enthusiasm. Day and night he would remain totally lost in the chanting of lord Vishnu's names and in remembering his noble attributes. When his father found that Prahlad would on no account give up his devotion to Lord Vishnu, he had him (Prahlad) pierced by the impaling stake, thrown under the feet of a wild elephant and submerged in deep water with a stone tied round his neck. He also made Prahlad drink a cup full of deadly poison, had him roasted in raging fire and dashed him to the ground from a mountain-peak, but not the slightest harm could be done to him.

When Prahlad would not perish by any means, his father became mad with rage. Tying Prahlad to a pillar and ready to kill him with a sword in hand, he shouted "Where is your Lord now?" Undaunted, Prahlad said "He is everywhere-in me, in you, in your sword, in that pillar, indeed, he pervades everything". Asking sarcastically "Why is he then not seen inside this pillar?" Hiranya Kashipu gave the pillar a sharp blow with his fist, whereupon a loud and terrible sound came out of it and Lord Vishnu emerged from within the pillar in the form of half man and half lion. Hiranya Kashipu got frightened on seeing that strange man-lion form. Lord Vishnu took Hiranya Kashipu on his knees and tore apart his belly.

Lord Vishnu then very affectionately took Prahlad on his lap and, while fondling him, ordered him to ask for a

boon. Prahlad prayed "O lord ! My father treated you as his enemy. May he be saved from going to hell" ! Lord Vishnu smiled and said "Seven past generations, seven future generations and seven generations on the mother's side of a family in which a devotee like you is born, that is, twentyone generations in all, attain salvation automatically".

(32) B A L I

Virochan was Prahlad's son, and king Bali was the son of Virochan. Though born in a demon-family, he was as great a devotee as his grand-father Prahlad. By dint of his strength and prowess, he had vanquished demons, devils, men and even gods. He was the sole monarch of the three worlds.

The gods in their predicament prayed to Lord Vishnu. Aditi, the mother of the gods, went through a long fast, as a result of which Lord Vishnu was very much pleased and he granted her the boon that he would be born as her son and would then remove the hardship and trouble besetting her sons, the gods.

In due course, lord Vishnu incarnated himself in Aditi's family. The body which the lord had assumed was very small in size, for which he earned the appellation of the "Dwarf".

King Bali, quite at ease as the undisputed lord of the three worlds, was performing a Yagya (sacrificial oblation). The Dwarf-god came to the sacrificial ground in the guise of a Brahmchári (celebate). King Bali, after receiving him warmly and with great respect, said "You are a most deserving person and I want to give you something. Do please ask for anything that you want". The Dwarf-god replied "I do not want anything. I would only ask you to grant me as much land as I can cover in three steps so that I can take my seat there". King Bali pleaded with him a lot to ask for

something more. But the Dwarf-god would not have anything more and he stuck to what he had asked for, viz., enough land to enable him to put three steps thereupon. So the king agreed to grant him his prayer.

Bali's family-guru, Shukráchárya, however, cautioned him, saying "The celebrate is no other than Lord Vishnu himself, in the guise of a dwarf and, in three steps, he will cover and grab the three worlds. You should, therefore, refuse to accede to his prayer".

Bali replied "It is a sin to go back on one's words. If he is really Lord Vishnu himself, it is all the more good. I will certainly fulfil my promise". Enraged on hearing Bali, Shukráchárya cursed him, but even then, he would not deviate from his determination. The dwarf was, indeed, Lord Vishnu himself. In one step, he covered the entire earth and, in another step, the whole of heaven. In lieu of the land required for his third step, he bound Bali. Bali was not perturbed in the least. He submitted, "Of greater worth is the giver than the gift. So may you be pleased to put your third step on my body".

Many gods had assembled there to witness this unparalleled sacrifice on the part of king Bali and they all started praising him. Brahmá asked Lord Vishnu, "Good deed should bring in good reward. This king performed Yagya, and made so many gifts. Why then was he bound down and put in a fix?" In reply, Lord Vishnu said, "From the Jiva on whom I bestow mercy, I first snatch away all his wealth, though, later on, I may grant him all the wealth of the world. This is what my mercy is and this again is how it works. Bali is my devotee and he can never be put into distress. I shall grant him the kingdom of Pátál (the nether regions)".

Bali then said "I do not need worldly objects, and I cherish Thee alone. May Thee be pleased to remain always at my door, this is all that I wish".

Lord Vishnu smiled and said to himself that he thought that he had bound Bali down but actually it was Bali who had bound him down.

It is to be pondered that because of his playing a trick with his devotee, Lord Vishnu had to give himself the punishment of serving as the king's gate-keeper. So, heaven alone would know what punishment would befall others who would have the impudence of playing tricks with devotees.

1911
The first of the year was a very dry one
and the crops were very poor. The
weather was very hot and the crops
were very dry.

The second of the year was a very wet one
and the crops were very good. The
weather was very cool and the crops
were very green. The crops were
very good and the weather was very
good.

1912

1913

1914

1915

1916

1917

PART 2

DEVOTEES OF KALI YUG

(33) N Á M D E V

Nám Dev was born at sun-rise on a Sunday, which was the eleventh day of the bright half of Kártik in 1327 Vikram, at a place called Narsí Bráhmañi in Maháráshtra. The name of his father was Dámá Shet and that of his mother Gonái. He was a cloth-printer by profession.

From his very childhood, Nám Dev developed love for God. When he was two to four years old, the worship of God used to be the object of his play. He would prepare an idol of God, have it clothed in nice dress and embellish it with ornaments, and then, he would perform its Sewá and Árti in the same way as he saw his maternal grand-father doing. He would ask for an idol of God from his maternal grand-father, but since he was only a small child, the old man would evade him by putting up some excuse or the other. One day his maternal grand-father told him, "I am going to a certain village and shall come back after four days. Till then, you should perform God's Sewa and oblation with proper care. If God accepts the "Bhog" (food) offered by you, I shall entrust this Sewa to you in future". Nám Dev was very happy on hearing this.

With great love and emotion, Nam Dev warmed up the milk for offering it to the idol, added sugar candy to it and then placed it before the deity. With folded hands, he prayed "O lord ! Here is the milk for you. Please do take it, considering me as your slave". God, however, did not drink the milk. Nam Dev became very sad at heart, started bemoaning despirited and then went to sleep hungry and thirsty. Two days passed in this manner.

On the third day, as soon as it was dawn, he thought that if the deity did not drink the milk, his maternal grand-

father would not entrust the Sewa to him, and so, after making the milk ready for Bhog, he again took it before the idol and prayed to God that he might be pleased to take it. When God did not drink the milk, he took out a knife and was about to cut his own throat. Moved by his firm determination, God, with one hand, caught Nam Dev's hand and, with his other hand, he took the cup of milk and started drinking. When only a little milk was left in the cup, Nam Dev broke forth "Please, leave a little for me, too". God smiled and gave Nam Dev Prashád sanctified by his taste.

When his maternal grand-father returned, Nam Dev told him all that had happened. He was beside himself with joy to hear the account given by Nam Dev and said "Let me, too, share your experience". Thereupon, Nam Dev brought the cup of milk with due reverence before the idol as on previous occasions. When God was a little late in coming, he took out a knife to put an end to his life. God, thereupon, drank the milk forthwith.

On the occasion of the "Shiv Rátrí" festival, Nam Dev went to a place called Aundhiá (Pandarpur) to have Darshan of Nág Náth Mahádev. Darshan and worship over, he stood with folded hands before the idol and started singing the deity's praise. The Brahmans, who were engaged in the religious bathing of the idol, took exception to Nam Dev's singing hymns at that time and got him removed from that place. In all humility and with folded hands, he stood at the back of the temple and started singing the deity's praise as before. Filled with pity and compassion for Nam Dev, the lord turned the entire temple from its very foundation to face Nam Dev. Seeing this, all were taken aback.

One day, Nam Dev's house accidentally caught fire. He started throwing into the fire even such things as were quite away from it and safe, and prayed "Please do accept these too". God smiled and asked "Do you think I am in fire, too?" Nam Dev replied "This house is yours. Who else can

touch it ?” Pleased with his reply, God had a new and beautiful shed put up over his dwelling place. When others saw it, they enquired “Who put up the shed and how much did he charge for his labour ?” Nam Dev’s reply was “The labour charge is very high. He wants body, mind and all one’s wealth. He must have all this first, and then only will he give you his Darshan”.

In Pandarpur, a certain wealthy person gave away in charity gold having the same weight as his. Gold was distributed throughout the city. On somebody’s advice, the rich man invited Nam Dev, too. Twice Nam Dev sent word to the effect that he did not stand in need of any worldly object. But on being requested a third time, he went there. The wealthy person entreated him to accept at least some gold. Nam Dev wrote out God’s name on a “Tulsi” leaf and asked for gold equal to it in weight. At first, the rich man requested Nam Dev to ask for more as did Bali to the dwarf god. Later on, he put all the gold he had in his own house, and also what he could procure from others, but even those were outweighed by the Tulsi leaf.

The rich man became very much ashamed, his pride of wealth vanishing altogether as a result of what had happened.

Nam Dev then told him “Make an offering of all the virtuous deeds you have performed in your entire life-time and then, perhaps, it might be possible to balance them evenly. At this, the rich man made the offering as directed. Still, the two sides of the scale were not evenly balanced. Utterly ashamed, the rich man said “Please take away all whatever is there”. Nam Dev’s sharp reply was “You fool, of what use is all this wealth to me ? I want only the wealth of devotion”.

Nam Dev went on pilgrimage accompanied by forty to fifty Sadhus. During the journey, he visited Punjab also. He widely propagated the cult of Bhakti (devotion) in Punjab. There are verses in Punjabi-Hindi composed by him. More

than sixty of his verses are to be found in "Granth Saheb". As done in Maharashtra, his verses are also sung in Punjab. The following verse of his is contained in Granth Saheb.

Go to none other than your Guru Dev.
Nam Dev has taken the refuge of his Guru.

There is a book "Nam Dev Ki Janm Sakhi" (biographical sketch of Nam Dev) written in Gurumukhi script. It gives an account of the life and teachings of a certain Nam Dev which tally, on main points, with those of Nam Dev of Maharashtra. The Mahratha (Maharashtrian) trait is clearly noticeable in the language of Nam Dev's verses contained in Granth Saheb.

It is well known that Nam Dev revived a dead cow. He was once singing the praise of Hari (God) at a certain place. The emperor, who was a Mohammedan, misconstrued that kind of singing as an act of infidelity and, with a view to insulting Nam Dev, had a cow slaughtered at that very place before the eyes of Nam Dev. He then threw out the challenge to Name Dev, "Revive this cow and then only do I know that your God is really true. If you fail, I shall sever your head from your body with this sword". Nam Dev revived the cow after offering prayers to God. A beautiful account of this event has been given in Granth Saheb.

Nam Dev stayed in Punjab for eighteen years. Thereafter, he returned to Pandarpur, and in 1407 Vikram, at the age of eighty, left his mortal coil on the steps to the main gate of the Vitthal temple.

Two of his Shabds (hymns) are given below :

O brother ! Have the Darshan of Hari (God) with your eyes. Devotion to Hari (God) and asssciation with Sadhus—make these the avowed objects of your heart.
(1)

Blessed are those feet which dance in love for Hari

(God) and blessed are those hands which are used for his worship. Also blessed is the head that bows before the Sadhu and the tongue that utters the name of Hari and none else. (2)

This world is a market place and all are traders here. As one is able to fill the bag, so does one make the gain, but a fool loses away his capital. (3)

Your soul has assumed a body, and in it, seek and find Hari (God). Says Nam Dev, sacrifice yourself before Hari (God), sing his praise and do nothing else. (4)

The man-lion god is always with one who avoids another person's wealth and wife. I do not want to have the look of a person who does not worship Náráyan (God). That man who maintains a distance between himself and Narayan (God) is a beast in human form.

Says Nam Dev that if one is not determined to perform the Bhakti of the Lord, one does not look handsome even if one possesses thirtytwo good qualities.

(34) G Y Á N D E V

He was Nam Dev's Guru. His father left his family and, going to some "Sannyási" (recluse), submitted that he had no wife and he, too, wanted to adopt "Sannyás" (asceticism). And so, he did become a Sannyási. His wife, on her part, got scent of him and was soon with him. She quarrelled with the mendicant who had admitted her husband to the mendicants' order and brought him (her husband) home. The orthodox Brahmans ostracised her husband, saying "Death alone can atone for the sin committed when a mendicant takes to family-life again". In due course, three sons and one daughter were born to Gyan Dev's father. Gyan Dev was his second son.

Gyan Dev went to Brahmans for learning the Vedas

from them but none amongst them would agree to teach him, saying that he was an outcaste and had, therefore, no right to study the Vedas. Gyan Dev retorted "To become a Brahman one does not have to study the Vedas, for, even a beast can go through them". So saying, he ordered a buffalo to recite the Vedas. That buffalo, thereupon, started reciting the Vedas and he chanted a few cantos with a correct pronunciation which not even one amongst the Brahmans remembered and could reproduce. Seeing this, all fell at Gyan Dev's feet.

(35) J A G D E V

King Jag Dev was a great hero. He was very righteous and liberal minded. The daughter of a certain king became enamoured of him. A proposal for marriage was sent through a messenger. King Jag Dev, however, did not agree. The girl's mother invited him to her city on some pretext and tried hard to persuade him through the ministers of that state, but he would not consent. The girl, too, gave vent to her suffering and grief arising out of her love and inclination for him. Still he did not agree to marry her. Thereupon, that wicked girl got him beheaded and had the head brought to her in order to have a look at him face to face. Even then, however, God so fulfilled the king's vow and determination that the head of the dead king would not cast even one look at her face. Every time she tried to stand before it, the face would turn away from her.

Verily, if one is to be averse to women, one should be like this. To a seeker of truth (salvation), the company of a woman is a source of pain and sorrow never allowing the bliss of meeting the Lord, to descend on him.

(36) R Á N K Á B Á N K Á

There was a Maharashtrian Brahman called Lakshmi Datta in Pandarpur. The name of his wife was Shrimati Rúpá Deví. Ránkájí was born to her at "Dhan Lagna" (i. e., at the time when the moon was at the sign of Sagittarius on the

Zodiac) on a Thursday which was the second day of the bright half of Mágh in 1347 Vikram. Bánkáji was born in the family of a Brahman called Har Dev in Pandarpur itself at "Kark Lagna" (i. e., at a time when the moon was at the sign of the Cancer on the Zodiac) on a Wednesday which was the seventh day of the dark half of Baisákh in 1351 Vikram. On attaining puberty, Ránkáji was married to Bánkáji.

Rankaji was extremely रूढ़ "Rank" or poor, and it was for this reason that he came to be called Ránká. Though a pauper and an illiterate, Rankaji was recipient of God's love and was His chosen one because of his renunciation and intense devotion. Ránkáji's wife also was chaste and faithful and very much given to devotion. Both husband and wife would gather dry wood in the forest and sell them. Whatever articles of food they bought with this money, they would place them before God as Bhog and have the Lord's "Prashad".

Finding Rankaji and his wife suffering all this hardship, the well known devotee, Nam Devji, became very sad at heart. He prayed to God that He might be pleased to grant wealth to Rankaji. In response to his prayer, Nam Devji received the message "Ranka does not want to accept anything. If you want to see that for yourself, remain in hiding by the roadside tomorrow morning".

The next morning, God left a bagful of gold coins on the way by which Rankaji and his wife used to go, and remained waiting a little away from that spot. Seeing the gold coins, Ranka started putting handfuls of dust on the bag containing them. His wife came there in the mean time. She asked "What are you trying to cover with dust?" Ranka replied "A bagful of gold coins was lying here. I knew that you were following me, and lest greed should overcome you on seeing the gold coins which would create an obstacle in the way of your spiritual practices, I was covering the bag with dust." Hearing this, the wife burst into a laughter, "Why

cover dust with dust ?” Rankaji was very happy to hear this from his wife and said, “Your renunciation has, indeed, a subtle way of looking at things. In my understanding, gold is different from dust. You have gone much ahead of me”. It was because of the “Bánká” or crooked and subtle renunciation of Ránkájí’s wife that she came to be called “Bánká”.

God, on the same day, had collected all the dry wood in the forest and, tying them into a bundle, kept it on the way. Ranka and Banka thought that somebody else had kept his bundle of wood there. Thinking that it would be a sin to touch what belonged to another person, both husband and wife returned home empty-handed and they had to starve that night. They pondered over the matter and came to infer that this was the result of only seeing the gold coins with their eyes and heaven alone knows what would have happened had they touched them with their hands.

The great devotee Rankaji departed from this world along with Bankaji when he was 101 years old.

(37) S A D N Á

It is believed that he lived during the latter part of 1500 Vikram. He was a great devotee and very much given to renunciation. Though a butcher by caste, he would never kill animals. He would buy meat from others and engage in their retail sale. Instead of weights, he had a pebble of “Saligram” (a pebble which is the representation of a deity) with which he would weigh out meat, no matter whether a customer would ask for a quarter of a kg or 5 kg. One day a Vaishnav (devotee of Lord Vishnu), on seeing this, thought that this idol should not remain in the possession of such a person. He asked for the Sáligrám pebble from Sadná Jí, who gave it to him. The Vaishnav brought the idol home, bathed it with “Panchámrit” (a mixture consisting of milk, curd, sugar, ghee and honey) placed it on a throne, and then offered “Bhog” (food) before it. At night he saw a dream in

which he was told to take the idol back to the place from where he had brought it. To this the Vaishnav replied, "The butcher's home is not a place fit for you to stay". Thereupon, he received the command "I have great affection for him. When he places me on the pan of the balance, I enjoy swinging on it. I consider his talk with his customer on business transaction as his singing in my praise". The Vaishnav then told Sadnáji all about his experience and returned the Sálíg Rám idol to him.

On that very day, Sadnaji took the vow of renunciation, and placing the said idol on his head, he started for Jagan Nath Puri. While he was on his way, a certain woman became attracted towards him by his youth and handsomeness. She invited him to her place, gave him a good dinner and, when it was night, she asked him to take her with him. He said that he could never do such a thing even on pain of death. That woman misunderstood him and, entering her room in no time, she severed her husband's head from his body and bringing it before Sadnaji told him, "You can now unhesitatingly take me with you". Sadnaji shot back, "You silly woman, I can never do that". Thereupon, that woman raised a hue and cry, alleging that though she had given shelter to Sadnaji, taking him for a Sadhu, he, on the other hand, had slashed off her husband's head and was now asking her to run away with him. Sadnaji was caught and taken before the judge. On being interrogated, he said "yes, I am guilty". Thereupon, the judge had Sadnaji's hands severed from his body. Thinking that this was the result of some sin committed by him in the past, Sadnaji remained happy in the Dhyán (meditation) and "Sumiran" (remembrance) of God, and proceeded towards Jagan Nath Puri.

Jagan Nath Ji, with great pleasure, sent his own palanquin for bringing Sadna Ji, but Sadna Ji would not get into it at first. However, when others pointed out to him that that would be going against the Lord's command, he took his seat in the palanquin. No sooner than he had come to the

presence of Jagan Nath Ji that his two hands were restored. Such is the greatness of devotion to God. The Lord has said that even if somebody has gone through all the four Vedas, he is not dear to me if he lacks in devotion towards me. On the other hand, a person who is my devotee, may be a Chándál*, even then, he is extremely dear to me and he alone deserves to be respected and worshipped.

Some couplets composed by Sadna Ji are given below.

The Chátak pines for a drop of water. Dying of thirst, it finds the ocean, whose waters, however, are of no use to it.

I have nothing, I am worth nothing. Nor do I have anything of my own. Savest, Thou, the honour, O Lord, of Thy slave Sadna, at all times.

(38) R Á M Á N A N D

A Faqir called Maulana Rashiduddin, who was a contemporary of Soami Rámá Nand Jí, belonged to Kashi (Varanasi). He wrote a book on the biographical sketches of Faqirs, in which one can find accounts of the lives and teachings of Mohammedan Faqirs. In that book, he has written something on Rámánand Soami, too. Its translation is given below.

A famous Mahátmá stays at the Panch Gangá Ghát in this city (Káshí). He has a radiant body and is a perfect Yogi. He is an Áchárya (preceptor) of the Vaishnavs and is adored by them all. He comes out of his cave only at Brahm Belá (before dawn) to bathe in the Ganges. That holy man goes by the name of Soami Rama Nand. His disciples are more than five hundred in number. Amongst them, twelve are recipients of his special mercy — Kabír, Pípá, Sená, Dhaná, Rai Dás, etc. This religious order is known as the "Shri" order. The main mantra (esoteric formula) of this order is "Ram Tárak" (Ram is the redeemer).

*One belonging to a very low caste.

(39) S E N Á

Sená was a barber by caste. He used to perform the Sewa of Sadhus. One day, when he was going to massage the king with oil, he met some Sadhus on the way. He took them home and soon got busy with the work of feeding them, with the fear of the king completely banished from his mind. When it was time for rendering the above Sewa to the king, God himself went to him in the garb of Sena and pleased him by massaging with oil. The devotee, Sena, went to the king afterwards and sought his pardon for being late. Having been blest by God's touch, the king could realize the greatness of Bhakti (devotion). He fell at the feet of the devotee, Sena, and became his disciple.

On "shaving", Sena has written :

Every day, I do some subtle shaving. I use the mirror of discernment and scissors of renunciation. I sprinkle the water of peace on my client's head and tightly tie into a knot the hair-tuft of ego. I cleanse the arm-pits of misunderstanding and misinterpretation and cut the nails of Kam (passion) and Krodh (anger). I perform this Sewa for people belonging to all the four castes, and remain at ease and peace.

(40) M Á D H A V D Á S

He was a Kánya Kuj Brahman by caste. After his wife's death, he cut off connections with all and, on going to Jagan Nath Puri, entrenched himself on the sea-shore and firmly engaged in the meditation of the Lord. He had no food, but that did not upset him. Three days passed without his getting anything to eat, but he remained absorbed in the meditation of the Lord, sitting on the same spot all the time.

Affection for devotees made the Lord restless and he soon sent his Prashad to Madhav Das Ji on a gold plate. After partaking of the Prashad, Madhav Das Ji threw aside

the gold plate as if it was just a "Pattal" (several leaves stitched together to serve as a plate for food).

Searching for the gold plate, the priests of the temple came to Madhav Das Ji and, finding the plate near him, they caught hold of him and gave him some stripes with a cane. However, God took upon himself the blows of the cane. He showed the priests the marks of caning on his person and said "It was I who sent the Prashad to Madhav Das Ji. The punishment which was meted out to him for no fault of his turned out to be my punishment. Terror-stricken, the priests went to Mahav Das Ji and, after many entreaties and prayers, had the wrong done by them pardoned.

Madhav Das Ji had such intense love and affection for the Lord's form that, while having Darshan, he would become unconscious and remain in the temple in that condition for a long time. When the priest came to shut the doors of the temple for the day, Madhav Das Ji, by the Lord's will, would remain unseen by the priests.

One night in winter, Madhav Das Ji felt very cold. Jagan Nath Ji told the priests that he himself felt very cold that night. Soon, the priests got some new quilts for him. The Lord very graciously gave Madhav Das Ji his own quilt, keeping the new quilts for his use.

Once Madhav Das Ji had some stomach trouble. When he started having loose motions, he went to the sea-shore. When no strength was left in him to carry water from the sea and wash his body, the Lord himself came and washed and cleansed him. Madhav Das Ji wondered who this person could be who was doing this Sewa for him. But he soon came to know that it was the act of the Lord Himself. With folded hands, he submitted "The propriety of this gesture on Your part, my Lord, is beyond my comprehension, the more so as it militates against the spirit of subordination on the part of the servant and the lofty position of the master (lord)". The Lord's reply was "When my devotee is in distress, I

cannot stand it". Madhav Das Ji thereupon told the Lord that He would not have to do this painful job had He removed his (Madhav Das Ji's) ailment. In reply, the Lord said "The incidence of a disease is the fruit of a Prárabdh Karma and it is not right and proper to eradicate a Prarabdh Karma, for that would be violation of the law of going through the results of past Karmas. Besides, when my devotee experiences the fruits of Prárabdh Karmas without suffering any pain, why should it be at all necessary to do away with those Prarabdh Karmas ?" After having explained all this to Madhav Das Ji, the Lord removed his ailment too, for the simple reason that there should not be any impairment of His devotee's faith in Him. The Lord explained further, "There are three kinds of Karmas. Of these, "Sanchit" (accumulated) and "Kriyamán" (performed in the present life) Karmas are eradicated the moment man adopts the Lord's refuge. As for Prárabdh Karmas, one must have to undergo their consequences". When this incident in Madhav Das Ji's life became widely known, people began to flock to him in large numbers. To avoid crowds, he started going out for begging.

He went to a certain place where a woman was cleansing her house. Hearing him begging for something, she hurled at Madhav Das Ji's face, the dirty linen with which she was doing house-cleaning. Madhav Das Ji felt pity on her. Smiling, he picked up that dirty cloth, washed it clean and then made wicks out of it, with which he lighted a lamp in Jagan Nath Ji's temple. By virtue of this action, there was illumination not only in the temple but also in the heart of that woman, or, in other words, Bhakti was instantly engendered within her. The next day when Madhav Das Ji went to that woman for begging, she ran to him and fell prostrate at his feet.

A certain Pandit came to Jagan Nath Puri, vanquishing, on his way, Pandits of all places in the interpretation of the

Shástras (scriptures). Coming to know of Madhav Das Ji's reputation as a Pandit, he challenged Madhav Das Ji to a discussion of the Shastras with him. Madhav Das Ji briefly discussed something and, on a piece of paper, scribed "Madhav Das was defeated". That Pandit went to Kashi and, vaunting his scholarship and greatness, declared that he had come after vanquishing Madhav Das Ji. When he placed that piece of paper before a congregation of Pandits, it was found that what was actually written on it was that Madhav Das had won and the said Pandit had been defeated.

Filled with rage, that Pandit again came to Jagan Nath Puri. He hurled many abuses on Madhav Das Ji and was ready to fight and quarrel with him. Madhav Das Ji told him that he was prepared to give in writing whatever the Pandit wanted. The Pandit shouted "You are very shrewd. I shall have your face blackened with tar and take you on an ass's back round the whole city". Madhav Das Ji kept mum and the Pandit left to take his bath.

Lord Jagannath Himself went to that Pandit in the guise of another Pandit and vanquished him in the interpretation of the Shastras (scriptures). He then made that Pandit ride on an ass and subjected him to great humiliation in the company of one to two hundred urchins whom He had collected, He, too, having assumed the form of a young lad. By a coincidence, Madhav Das Ji, too, came in that direction. He submitted to Lord Jagannath Ji, "Was it proper, my Lord, to humiliate such an eminent Pandit?" The Lord replied "Of course it was. By making my devotee ride on an ass's back, he really was trying to make me ride on that animal". Madhav Das Ji himself helped that Pandit to get down from the ass's back and persuaded him to forgive him (Madhav Das Ji) for whatever wrong he had done to that Pandit.

(41) K A R M Á B Á Í

Young kids immediately, on rising from bed, ask for something to eat, and their mothers remain mindful of this

even before they wake up. With the same feeling in her heart, Karmá Báí's first concern of the day used to be to prepare Khichri (a mixture of rice and pulses boiled together) for Lord Jagannath Ji. Accordingly, before attending the usual morning routine and bath, she used to prepare a little Khichri in an earthen pot on mild fire and, when it was cooked, would offer it as "Bhog" (food) to Jagan Nath Ji with great love and affection and, the Lord would be pleased to partake of it with much relish.

Once, a certain Sadhu came to her. He taught her to offer Bhog with proper rites, after taking bath and attending to daily routine. From that time, Karma Bai started offering "Bhog" with proper rites. This began to cause delay in the Lord's taking food. One day while Jagannath Ji was taking Khichri seated on Karma Bai's lap, "Raj Bhog" (food for the king, i. e., Lord Jagannath) became ready in Jagan Nath Puri, and Jagannath Ji reached there without even washing his hands and mouth. The priests were surprised to find Khichri adhering to the Lord's hand and mouth and they very humbly enquired from Him what the matter was. Lord Jagannath Ji thereupon said "Previously, Karma Bai used to offer me Khichri Bhog early in the morning and, pleased with her love for me, I used to go to her to partake of it. Now a certain Sadhu has taught her to offer Bhog with proper rites and this causes delay. Hence, you should convey my order to the Sadhu that he should go to Karma Bai and instruct her to offer Khichri Bhog to me in the same way as she used to do before".

The priests thereupon made a search for the Sadhu and, on contacting him, sent him to Karma Bai's place. The Sadhu gave her instructions as per Lord Jagannath Ji's order. Karma Bai used to look upon the rites and rituals taught by the Sadhu as a nuisance, and so, she was beside herself with joy when she was instructed to revert back to her original practice. Even to this day, Jagannath Ji is offered Khichri Bhog before any other kind of Bhog.

Pípa Ji was the king of Gágraun Gadh. It is a place in Rajasthan surrounded by the Arávali mountains (range) and is very important from the military point of view. Pípa Ji was such a great devotee that under the influence of his devotion even beastly persons were led to adopt the Lord's Saran (refuge).

In accordance with family tradition, Pípa Ji was at first a votary of the goddess "Shakti" (power and energy). Once, some Vaishnavs, became Pípa Ji's guests, but since he was not a Vaishnav, the guests could not be entertained as nicely as should have been done. At night, someone told him in a dream "How weak-witted you are. You turn away from the Lord and, yet, you seek salvation". From that very moment, the king started cultivating Bhakti (devotion). He went to Kashi (Varanasi) to take refuge under Rama Nand Ji, a famous Mahatma of those days, and receive initiation from him. The king's relations, his courtiers and all his subjects became very much upset at this development and they thought that the king would now surely turn a Sadhu.

When Pípa Ji reached Káshí and presented himself before Soání Rámá Nand Ji, the latter said "My brother ! I am a Sannyási (recluse), and so, what have kings, who are the very emblem of engrossment in worldly pleasures, to do at my place ? This is the refuge of those who have renounced the world and have developed an aversion for it". Hearing this, Pípa Ji was very much disappointed but he was very firm in his determination. Relinquishing the world, he became a Faqir and going to Rama Nand Ji the next day, he told him that he, too, had turned a Faqir. To test him, Rama Nand Ji said "If your longing for the Lord's Darshan is really so strong and deep, go and jump into that well, and you will have his Darshan there". At this Pípa Ji ran towards the well determined to jump into it, but Rama Nand Ji's disciples held him back. Noticing this sincerity in Pípa Ji's

Bhakti, the Guru Maharaj initiated him and made him his disciple. He ordered Pipa Ji "Now go back home, and remain engaged in the Sewa of Sadhus". While leaving, Pipa Ji prayed to his Guru Maharaj that he might be pleased to pay a visit to Gág Raun Garh. The Guru Maharaj's reply was "If you continue to perform the Sewa of Sadhus and remain firm in your Bhakti as at present and if I go on getting the information that you are doing as directed, I shall visit your place after one year".

Returning to his capital, Pipa Ji applied himself wholeheartedly to the Sewa of Sadhus and to spiritual practices. At the end of one year, he wrote to his Guru Maharaj praying "Please do pay a visit to this slave's place as promised by you". Granting Pipa Ji's prayer, Soami Rama Nand Ji left for Gag Raun Garh accompanied by his disciples. When he reached the outskirts of the city, the king received him with great love, devotion and respect. The news of Soami Rama Nand Ji's arrival spread far and wide all over Pipa Ji's kingdom, nay, the whole of Rajasthan. Thousands came to Gag Raun Garh, to have Rama Nand Ji's Darshan.

After staying in Gag Raun Garh for some days, Rama Nand Ji expressed his desire to visit Dwarka. Pipa Ji became very sad and morose and prayed that he, too, might be allowed to accompany his Guru. On getting Guru Maharaj's permission, he cut asunder all his worldly bondages for good and was soon ready to accompany his Guru in the garb of a Sadhu. But one difficulty cropped up and that was that all the twelve queens of Pipa Ji wanted to accompany him. However, eleven amongst them were somehow dissuaded, but the youngest queen, Sítá Deví, was bent upon accompanying the king and she would not listen to any pleadings to the contrary. To test her determination, she was told that she could accompany the king if she were prepared to come naked. The queen agreed even to this condition. The king thereupon took her with him and started on the journey,

One Brahman also wanted to accompany them. When refused permission, he took poison and died. He was revived by sprinkling on him water sanctified by Rama Nand Ji.

After staying in Dwarka for many days, Soami Rama Nand Ji returned to Kashi with his disciples, but Pipa Ji stayed back and he remained in Dwarka for a very long time. Later on, in the course of travels, Pipa Ji returned to his capital, Gag Raun Garh, and started living in a cave near the place of confluence of the two rivers, Ahú and Kálí Sindh. The cave, the exact spot where he used to live and his temple can still be found at this place. The cave is really worth seeing. Nobody even now has a clear idea of the entire cave. Some say that it extends down to the river bed. Pipa Ji used to take his bath in the river and then go back to the temple. Formerly, a Melá used to be held here. On days auspicious for bathing in holy rivers, large crowds collect here even to this day. This place is in Jhálá Wád.

Pipa Ji's life is replete with many strange happenings. Many such events took place because of his wandering in forests all alone off and on.

While in Dwarka, he was once seized with such an intense desire to have Shri Krishna's Darshan that he jumped into the sea. His queen, Sita Devi, too, followed suit. There, he had the Lord's Darshan in water. It is said that Pipa Ji remained under water for one whole week and when he came out, all were very much surprised. The saying goes that Pipa Ji gave a stamp received by him from the Lord to the priests of the temple and he told them that anybody on whom an impression would be made with the stamp would attain divinity, and he would escape from the cycle of recurrent births and deaths.

When this greatness of Pipa Ji became widely known, large crowds started gathering round him. He then left that place. On the way, he met some Pathán troops, who,

finding his queen, Sita Devi, to be very beautiful, forcibly took her away. But as she remembered the Lord, He instantly manifested Himself and punished the miscreants. Pipa Ji told the queen "Go back home even now, for, troubles frequently crop up because of you". The queen replied "Maharaj, what trouble did we have to face so far which was removed by your efforts ? What difficulty did arise in coping with which the Lord did not help us ? What trouble has to this day disturbed your spiritual practices ? Both of us have had experiences of the help and protection being vouchsafed to us by the Lord. It is strange that you are still giving me this kind of advice and instruction". Pipa Ji was pleased at this firm determination of the queen.

Proceeding further, they came across a lion on the way. Pipa Ji initiated that lion also in the ways of Bhakti (devotional practices). Even to this day, no lion would kill a Sadhu and a cow at that place.

Proceeding from there, they came to a certain village. Seeing some sticks in a shop in the market, Pipa Ji asked for one. The shop-keeper rudely said "Go and get one from the forest". No sooner he had said this than all the sticks became green with leaves sticking out of them. The place, in fact, turned into a forest. Pipa Ji cut the branch of a tree and shaped it into a stick.

Thereafter, they went to the house of a devotee called Chídhar. He had no food at his place then. He stripped his wife and after having made her sit inside the room, sold away her Dhoti, and with the money, purchased some eatables and brought them home. When food was ready and the guests took their seats to partake of it, they also asked Chídhar to join them along with his wife. The devotee Chídhar requested them to start eating, submitting that his wife would later on partake of the leavings of their food. Thereupon, Pipa Ji sent his queen Sita Devi to find out what the matter was. The queen saw Chidhar's wife sitting

naked inside the room. The whole thing became known then. The queen tore her own Dhoti in two and gave half of it to Chidhar's wife. She found herself very insignificant before the love and devotion of Chidhar's wife.

Thinking that it would be right and proper to render some Sewa to devotees like Chidhar and his wife, Pipa Ji and his queen came to the market place and sat at a corner with the idea that the queen would pose as a prostitute so that a good sum could be earned quickly. Many people were attracted by the queen's beauty but when they came near her they dared not cast one straight look at her nor could they talk to her in a filthy language. On the other hand, on coming to know of the real state of affairs, they left after offering the king and the queen a large quantity of food-grains and many gold and silver coins. Pipa Ji sent them all to Chidhar's house. The devotee Chidhar, however, was such a self-denying person that he distributed all those things to other devotees that very moment, himself remaining in the same condition as before.

Leaving that place and facing many troubles on the way, Pipa Ji reached a city called Todá. When he went to a tank to take bath, he found a vessel full of gold coins there. At night, Pipa Ji told the queen all about what he had seen. Thieves overheard them. They went to the tank to collect the gold coins but found a big snake instead of gold coins there. They decided that the persons who wanted them to be bitten by the snake should themselves be made the victims of snake-bite. Accordingly, they brought that vessel and quietly left it at the place where Pipa Ji was staying. Pipa Ji found 720 gold coins in that vessel and he spent them all in three days giving Bhandara feasts to Sadhus.

Súr Sen was the king of that place. Hearing of Pipa Ji's arrival he came to him to have his Darshan and prayed that Pipa Ji might be pleased to initiate him. To test him, Pipa Ji said that he would have to make an offering of his body,

mind and wealth first. King Sur Sen instantly complied with the condition. Pipa Ji then initiated him and, afterwards, returned to him whatever he had offered, saying that there should be no curtain (mental reservation) between one devotee and another. Hearing what had happened, king Sur Sen's brothers and friends became very angry and started thinking of ways and means for giving trouble to Pipa Ji.

A certain trader came there to purchase oxen. The king's brothers directed him to go to Pipa Ji, saying that he had some good oxen with him. The trader went to Pipa Ji, and after placing before him all the money that he had with him, said that he had come to purchase some oxen. Pipa Ji got the scent of the mischievous plan of the miscreants and told the trader that the oxen had then gone to the forest for grazing and he should come afterwards and take them. The trader thereupon left and Pipa Ji, on his part, started arranging for a Bhandara feast. Thousands of Sadhus soon gathered for the feast. The trader came back and asked for the oxen. Pipa Ji said "Here are thousands of them and they can take you to the highest region. You can take with you as many of them as you want." The trader's great good luck had awakened. On having the Darshan of the devotees, he instantly adopted the Lord's Saran (refuge), and distributed nice Dhotis to the Sadhus.

Once Pipa Ji was away from home. Some Sadhus in the mean time came to his house but there was nothing to eat at Pipa Ji's place then. Queen Sita Devi went to the market and brought articles of food from a shop-keeper, after promising to him that she would visit him at night. Pipa Ji happened to be back at that very moment and on hearing all that had happened in his absence, he was extremely pleased. Dressed up at night when she was about to go out, it started raining. Pipa Ji took the queen on his back all the way to the shopkeeper's. The very first sight of her opened his inner eyes. Finding that her feet were quite dry, he asked "Mother, how did you come all this way?"

The queen replied "My husband has carried me on his back and he is waiting outside". The shop-keeper ran towards him and, falling at his feet, started beseeching and praying to him. Pipa Ji, told him "Do not be ashamed. Go to your shop. After all, you gave me such material things, for whose sake, even brothers are led to fight and quarrel amongst themselves". The shop-keeper felt very sorry and started weeping bitterly. Pipa Ji was moved to pity. He initiated the shop-keeper and thereby showed him the way to escape from recurrent births and deaths.

A pretty woman-hawker who sold oil, used to go from place to place crying "Buy oil, buy oil from me". Pipa Ji told her that the beauty of her countenance would have been very much enhanced if she had uttered the Lord's name with her mouth. The pretty oil-dealer became angry at this and broke forth "It is only when somebody dies that one utters the Lord's name". When she went home, she found her husband dead. In great humility, she fell at Pipa Ji's feet and promised that she would utter the Lord's name. Pipa Ji thereupon brought her husband back to life. There are many similar accounts about Pipa Ji.

A verse composed by Pipa Ji is quoted below.

The body is the Lord's seat. It is a temple. It is the vehicle and it alone determines one's caste. Burn the incense, light the candle and make offering of food to the lord within the body itself. Worship Him within thy body. . (1)

Seeking within the body, one finds priceless treasure. One neither gains nor loses anything here. One should sing the Lord's Name. (2)

Whatever is in Brahmand (the macrocosm) exists in the Pind (the microcosm), and whoever seeks, will find it. Pipa pays obeisance to the Supreme Being whose secret the Sat Guru alone can give out. (3)

(43) SURESHWARÁ NÁND

He was a disciple of Swami Rama Nand Ji and a great devotee. He sang so highly of Prashad that thousands of people developed firm faith in its glory and greatness. Once while he was going to some place, a mischievous person brought some wine and a meat-cake before him and told him that they were the Lord's Prashad. As soon as Sureshwará Nand was told that they were Prashad, he partook of them and resumed his journey. Taking the cue from him, his disciples who were following him, also partook of them. Noticing what they were doing, Sureshwará Nand became angry and asked them what they had eaten. They replied that they ate the same thing as he had done. Sureshwará Nand retorted "What I took was Prashad". Indeed, leaves of the holy Basil and the sand of the Ganges soon came out of his stomach. His disciples then fell at his feet and faith in the Lord's Prashad was engendered in them.

To the one who is perfect even poison becomes ambrosia whilst to the imperfect even ambrosia is like poison. Ráhu, the demon, drank nectar, but, nevertheless, he was beheaded.

(44) DHANÁ

Dhaná was a Ját* by caste. But he was a great devotee. When he was just a boy, a Brahman came to his place one day. Seeing the Brahman performing the Sewa of the Lord and worshipping Him, the devotee Dhana asked him to hand over the idol to him so that he (Dhana), too, could engage in worship and devotion. At first the Brahman tried to evade but, on finding Dhana obstinate, he gave him a small black stone. Dhana touched his head and eyes with it and was soon engaged in its Sewa and worship.

When Dhana Ji's mother brought breads for him, he placed them before the idol and, with eyes closed, sat wait-

* Name of a tribe of Rajputs (who are mostly cultivators). A member of the tribe.

ing for a long time for the Lord to partake of them. When the Lord did not eat them, he became very sad and morose. With folded hands, he again and again beseeched and prayed to the Lord to taste the bread. When the Lord would not do so even then, he threw the breads into the water-tank. He went on repeating this every day, and himself remained without food and drink. Dhana became physically very weak, and his condition became that of a dying person.

The Lord was filled with compassion. He manifested Himself in person and started taking the breads. When half of the breads had been taken, the devotee Dhana asked "Are you going to take them all or leave something for me?" The Lord smiled and gave half of the breads to Dhana Ji. This went on day after day.

The Lord thought that He should render some service to one whose bread He was eating, for, it is not good and proper to eat at somebody's cost without doing any work for him. Hence, after consulting the devotee Dhana, He used to take his cows to the forest to tend them there, and he would then bring them back home.

One day the same Brahman, who had given the black stone to Dhana Ji, came to his place and asked him "Are you performing the Sewa of the idol and worshipping it, or not?" The devotee Dhana replied "Maharaj! What a wonderful Sewa and worship you entrusted me with! I had to starve for many days because of your Lord. It was with much difficulty that I could bring Him round, and now He is even tending my cows". The Brahman was very much surprised to hear all this and said "Let me, too, have the Darshan of the Lord". At his request, Dhana enabled him to have His Darshan. The Brahman had his heart's desire fulfilled. At the Lord's command, Dhana went to Kashi (Varanasi) and received initiation from Swami Rama Nand Ji.

One day Dhana's father gave Dhana some wheat-grains and sent him to the field to sow them. Dhana met some

Sadhus on the way. He gave away all the grains to those Sadhus. Afraid of his father, he went to the field and ploughed the land, after which, he returned home. The Lord, in His mercy, had the best crop raised in that field. All started admiring it. Dhana thought that people were joking with him on seeing his plot of land lying barren. But on himself going there and seeing his lush green field, he could well understand whose work it was. He paid obeisance to the Lord again and again internally and became engrossed in love and bliss.

(45) THE STORY OF A CERTAIN KING

A certain king was a great devotee. He had such profound faith in Prashad that he had his own hand severed from his body due to a slight lapse in his regard and respect for it. It happened like this that once when the king was engrossed in a game of dice, Jagan Nath Ji's priest brought His Prashad to him, but since at that moment he had the dice in his right hand, he held out his left hand to receive the Prashad. Regarding this as an insult to the Prashad, the priest angrily took it back, without giving it to the king.

The king became very much ashamed. He went to the priest running and, after praying to the priest with great humility, got the Prashad for him. Highly repentful of this lapse on his part, the king remained confined within his palace worrying all the time. He started thinking that somehow or other his right hand should be severed from his body inasmuch as it had been disrespectful to the Lord's Prashad. But a great difficulty arose here, for, how could anyone dare slashing off the king's hand ?

One day the king's minister asked him why he remained worried all the time. The king replied "A ghost visits me at night and, thrusting his hand through my lattice window, makes a lot of uncanny noise. You stay at my palace at night, and as soon as the ghost thrusts his hand through the lattice window, cut it off".

The minister kept vigil at night. The king thrust his hand through the lattice window and raised a tumult. The minister dealt such a severe blow with his sword that the hand was cut down to fall apart. When the minister came to know that it was the king's hand, he became very much upset and ashamed. The king told him "You need not worry. A ghost is he who is disrespectful towards the Lord".

Pleased at such sincerity and devotion of His devotee, the merciful Lord ordered that Prashad should be sent to the king and his severed hand should be brought to Him. The priests ran to meet the king who, on his part, was coming to have the Lord's Darshan. When the priests gave Prashad to the king on the way, the latter, with great love and reverence, raised both of his hands to receive it. At that very moment, by the Lord's mercy a new hand had come out at the place of the severed hand. The Lord had the severed hand planted in His garden. In due course, it grew into a sweet-scented marydam tree whose flowers are offered to Jagan Nath Ji during His worship.

The Lord's Prashad is not like ordinary food and drink, rather, it is the very form of the Lord Himself. Those who think otherwise, are sinners ; they are annihilated.

(46) V Á R M U K H Í

The story of a certain harlot who lived in the south is very interesting and worth hearing. Her house was full of treasures, but of what use were they, she being a mere harlot ? The outer glamour and splendour of harlots is well known. Her apartments and their surroundings were spotlessly clean and beautiful. One day some Sadhus were passing that way. Finding it to be a clean and tidy spot with trees providing pleasantly cool shade and with water readily available, they decided to stay there. They entrenched themselves here and there all over the place. The Sadhus did not choose that site in the hope of getting money or being worshipped by

the local people but their only consideration was that it provided nice facilities for doing the Lord's Sewa.

When Vár Mukhí Jí walked to the gate to the tinkling of the ornaments on her person, she not only felt happy by having the Darshan of the Sadhus, but great purity dawned on her mind at the same time. She started thinking that these Mahatmas (great souls) had no idea of her social status. Be that as it may, there was no doubt that her great good luck had awakened. She placed one platter-ful of gold coins before the Mahant (leader of the Sadhus) and, in all humility, prayed that with that money he might be pleased to arrange for the Lord's Bhog (food) so that a vile sinner that she was, might attain blessedness.

The Mahant asked her "Who are you and who are your parents?" On hearing this question, Vár Mukhí kept mum and she became very much agitated and worried at heart. The Mahant then said "Have no fear or misgiving. Tell us everything without any hesitation". She thereupon replied "I am Vár Mukhí. By the Lord's grace, my treasure-house is full. There is nothing worldly that I do not possess. Kindly do accept these pieces of straw. If you are bent upon probing into my antecedents, you should understand that this sinner deserves nothing but death".

The Sadhus thereupon told her "We shall tell you of one way out. Have a beautiful crown made out of these gold coins and then offer it with love to the Lord Shri Ranga Náth".

Var Mukhi said "How can the Lord accept that offering from one whom ordinary people would not even touch"? The Sadhus thereupon reassured her that they would be staying at that place till she made the offering of the crown with her own hands, and she should, therefore, go ahead with the plan to make it.

With all the wealth at her disposal, Var Mukhi had a bejewelled crown worth three lakhs of rupees prepared with

great reverence. With deep love and faith, she proceeded with the crown, dancing and singing to the accompaniment of melodious music, creating, on the whole, an atmosphere of great pomp and glamour. When she came near Shri Ranga Nath's temple, she started, mansurating. Sad and ashamed, she retraced a few steps and, cursing herself, fell on the ground with tears flowing from her eyes.

The all-knowing Lord, who is ever merciful to the humble and the lowly, at once ordered the chief priest to welcome Vár Mukhí with due kindness and cordiality so that she could put the crown on His head with her own hands. The priests, accordingly, brought Vár Mukhi to the presence of the Lord. His throne being too high for her, her hands did not reach up to Him. As she was wondering what to do, Ranga Nath Ji Himself lowered His head before her. The supremely fortunate woman lifted the crown with her hands and, with great love and emotion, placed it on the head of the Lord.

(47) THE STORY OF A CERTAIN BRAHMAN

A certain Brahman, who was a great devotee, was once bringing his wife from her parent's house. On the way, he met some Thugs (cheats) who told him, "We are going the very same place which you are going to. We know of a shorter route, and you, too, come with us". The Brahman did not believe them. On the Thugs' reaffirming their advice swearing by God's name, the Brahman's wife persuaded him to agree, saying that it would be no longer proper to reject their suggestion.

On entering dense forest, the Thugs killed the Brahman and then took away his wife and all that the couple had. As the woman walked with them, she again and again looked behind. The Thug's enquired "Now that your husband is no more, who else is behind that you are looking at?" The woman replied "I am looking for him who stood between

you and us". The Thugs said "That is all idle talk. There is no God". But that woman had a firm faith in God's existence. Instantly, a man riding on a horse appeared on the scene. He killed the Thugs, brought the Brahman back to life and then after escorting the couple to their home, disappeared.

(48) R Á N K Á

This devotee was a potter by caste. Whatever he earned by his profession, he would spend in the service of the Lord's devotees. Once he prepared his kiln for firing his earthen vessels but, due to some reason, could not strike fire during day-time. At night, a cat gave birth to kitten and then went away after hiding them in an unfired earthen vessel. Ránká knew nothing about this. The next morning he fired the kiln without losing any more time. Later on, when he came to know of the kitten, he became very much upset and was filled with great grief and sorrow. He said to himself that it was only God who could save them now.

It is worth appreciation that had Ranka's entire house been consumed by fire or even if his own life were in danger, he would not invoke the Lord's help. A devotee does not ask for even his own salvation from God. And, of course, he would not hanker after trivial worldly things. By the Lord's grace, all his desires are automatically fulfilled, without his asking for anything. There is no need for him to beg for anything.

One should appreciate the kindness and compassion of devotees who cannot bear to see suffering of even an insignificant creature. When the Lord saw that his devotee Ránká was in distress and agony lest the kitten would be consumed by the fire, He so ordained that whilst the whole kiln was on fire, the vessel containing the kitten which even escaped burning and even the heat of the fire. Seeing this, Ránká paid obeisance to the Lord in a spirit of intense love and devotion.

From then onward, it has become a practice with potters to fire their kiln the very day on which it is prepared.

(49) T R I P U R D Á S

He was a Káyasth by caste and belonged to Sher Garh. He used to have filial love and affection for his Isht. In winter, every year, he used to have nice dresses made with cloth embellished by golden embroidery or some similar high-quality cloth and then send them for the use of the deity (idol). It so happened that the king of that place once took away all his wealth. He became penni-less. He spent much time on thinking what should be done but could not find any way out. As he contemplated upon his Isht as a handsome boy, he became very much upset and started weeping, thinking that his boy-Isht must be feeling very cold. Going home, he made a thorough search, whereupon he could find a silver ink-pot. With the money he realized by selling it, he purchased a piece of red, coarse cloth. But as he cast his look on it, he wept thinking that it was too coarse a cloth for the use of such a tender boy. Any way, he sent that cloth with a certain devotee, cautioning him that he should not tell anybody anything about it, for the cloth was not worthy of even the slave of the Lord's slaves, but he should quietly keep it in the store. That person handed over the cloth given by Tripur Das to the store-keeper who very casually shoved it under all other pieces of cloth.

One night, the Lord felt very cold and he started shivering. Many high-quality and thick quilts were brought for him from the store, but even then he did not feel warm. Thinking over the matter, the chief disciple told the store-keeper and workers "Brothers ! It is not the cold which is troubling the Lord but it is his love for one of his chosen devotees. So, tell me which devotee has sent which of the winter clothings for the Lord's use." Thereupon, those people covered the Lord's body turn by turn with the warm clothings sent by various kings, nobles and others, mentioning the names of the offerers, but even then, there was not the

slightest abatement of the cold felt by the Lord. The store-keeper then remembered what had happened and he told the chief disciple that Tripur Das, who had then become a pauper, had sent a piece of very coarse cloth. The chief disciple thereupon asked him to bring that cloth forthwith. He got a gown made out of it and then had the Lord dressed in it. The cold he was feeling was instantly gone.

(50) N A R S Í M E H T Á

Narsí Mehtá was a great devotee of Gujrát. His poetical compositions are sung even to this day not only in Gujrát but throughout the country. He was born in a Nágar-Brahman family of the Bar-Nagrá caste in the city of Júná Garh in the region of Káthiáwád. From his very early years, most of his time used to be spent in singing the glory of the Lord and in doing the Sewa of Sadhus. This was, however, not to the liking of his family-members who tried their best to dissuade him from engaging in such activities, but all to no effect. One day his sister-in-law tauntingly said to him "With such Bhakti surging within you, why don't you go and meet the Lord?" Her remarks had a profound effect on him. He left home and, going to a temple of Shiv, started worshipping him.

For seven days and nights, he remained lying there without any food or drink. Thinking that even a worldly man vouchsafes protection to one who knocks at his door and seeks shelter, Shiv gave his Darshan to Narsi Mehta in person, and told him to ask for anything that he wanted. Narsi submitted that he did not know what to ask for, and hence, Shiv might be pleased to grant him on his own anything that was dear to him (Shiv Ji). Pleased with the attitude of Narsi Ji, Shiv took him to "Gau Lok" (heaven) and showed him a wonderful spectacle.

Narsi Ji returned home after completing his penance, and started living separately with his own children. One son and two daughters were born to him. Since he remained

mostly engaged in singing the praise of God and performing the Sewa of Sadhus, he could maintain his family with very great difficulty. His wife pleaded with him a lot and urged him to take up some vocation, but Narsi Ji did not like the idea of doing anything for the sake of earning a living. He had the firm conviction that the Lord Himself would remove all his sufferings and wants. And this is what happened.

Once, some Sadhus visited his city. They asked people "Is there any banker here, for we want to take a draft for Dwarka?" Some jealous persons mentioned the name of Narsi Ji and also told the Sadhus that in case he did not agree, they should fall at his feet. The Sadhus went to Narsi Ji, and placing seven hundred rupees before him, asked for a draft for Dwárká. When Narsi Ji would not agree, they started pressing him to accede to their request with folded hands. Narsi Ji thought that either the Sadhus had come to him being deliberately misled by some mischievous persons or the Lord Himself had arranged to send this money to him by providing the necessary inspiration in the hearts of the Sadhus. So, he quickly picked up the money, and writing a draft in the name of Sánwal Sáh, told the Sadhus that they should present the draft to the person in Dwarka in whose name it had been drawn.

The Sadhus duly reached Dwarka. They made a thorough search for the banker Sánwal Sáh, but could not trace him. Tired, tormented by hunger and thirst and very much upset, they sat down at a place outside the city, thinking that they would resume their search after they had some food and drink. The Lord, on the other hand, thought that though it is true that one would find it extremely difficult to meet him without making a thorough and painstaking search for him, yet, at the same time, if he gave too much trouble to the Sadhus to seek him out, that would cast a blame on creditworthiness of Narsi Ji. So, the Lord put on the garb of a banker and, with a bagful of rupees on his shoulders, came to the place where the Sadhus were sitting and asked

them who had brought Narsi Ji's draft. The Sadhus felt as if their very life had been restored to their dead bodies and all of them shouted in a chorus "Maharaj ! We have brought it. We are tired of searching for you. It was very kind of you to have come to us yourself." The banker replied "You spent several days in search of me. The reason why you could not find me out is that only a true devotee of the Lord knows me". The Sadhus then presented the draft, and the banker, after giving them the amount in cash, also gave them a letter addressed to Narsi Ji in which he had written that Narsi Ji should continue his banking business, regarding him (the banker) as his clerk or agent.

On coming back from their journey, the Sadhus gave that letter to Narsi Ji. Narsi Ji asked them "Did you have Sanwal Sah's Darshan ?" They replied "Yes, Maharaj, we had his Darshan". Narsi Ji thereupon congratulated them very affectionately and explained everything to them. On hearing him, the Sadhus were filled with great love. Narsi Ji spent all the money in performing the Sewa of Sadhus, for it was necessary to return the money to the banker and there was no other method by which the money could reach him except by performing the Sewa of Sadhus.

A son was born to Narsi Ji's elder daughter. No presents like dresses, ornaments, sweetmeats, etc., which are given on such an occasion, were sent from Narsi Ji's place. The mother-in-law of Narsi Ji's daughter and other members of her in-law's family started taunting and abusing her. She sent word to Narsi Ji to the effect that her mother-in-law was tormenting her and he should bring some presents to her in-law's place if he could manage to do so.

Narsi Ji went to his daughter on an old and worn out bullock cart. Not only the cart itself was in a tottering state, but the bullock also was very old and weak. Seeing this wretched condition of her father, Narsi Ji's daughter reprimanded him saying "If you had nothing with you, why did

you come here at all ?” Narsi Ji replied “You need not worry. Prepare a list of all the things that are required after consulting your mother-in-law and then give it to me”. Filled with rage, the mother-in-law made out a long list of dresses and ornaments meant for all the people of the city. When Narsi Ji’s daughter gave him the list, he sent her back saying “Go and ask your mother-in-law again ; if, due to inadvertance, she has omitted anything, she should try to remember it and include it in the list”. Out of rage, the mother-in-law wrote on the list that Narsi Ji should send two stones also.

Narsi Ji was put up in an old and dilapidated verandah at the back of his daughter’s in-law’s place. The water which was sent for his bath was so hot that one could not even touch it. However, there was a smart shower of rains at that very moment. The water became fit for use and Narsi Ji had a nice bath. There was a room in the wretched building where Narsi Ji was staying. After putting up a curtain at the entrance to room, he started singing the Lord’s praise. The Lord Himself brought all the things mentioned in the list.

“Firm in the trust reposed in his Isht, free from greed of any kind, spotless in character and ever relying on the refuge of the Lord who is the giver of all happiness, Narsi remains fearless and undaunted at all times.”

The mother-in-law started distributing all the things, such as dresses, clothes etc. to the citizens.

Narsi Ji’s presents included items which those people had never seen. Two stones, with gold and silver engravings, were also found. Such fame of Narsi Ji soon spread all over that city, nay, throughout that region that his praise is sung there even to this day. At the end, when Narsi Ji was about to depart, a certain woman came whose name had not been included in the list. Narsi Ji’s daughter gave away her own dress to that woman, but she objected saying that she

would have her share from the hands of that very person from whom others had received presents. Narsi Ji remembered the Lord who appeared on the scene and gave the woman her share. Narsi Ji's daughter was delighted to see this and, indeed, her joy knew no bounds. Overwhelmed by the unique Bhakti of her father, she severed all connection with her husband and other members of his family and left in the company of Narsi Ji. She then dedicated herself to the singing of the Lord's praise. Narsi Ji's second daughter would not even agree to marry. She, too, applied herself to the singing of the Lord's praise. The name of one daughter of Narsi Ji's was Kunwar Sená and that of the other one Ratan Sená.

Two women, who used to beg by singing songs, were on their round near Narsi Ji's place, but nowhere could they get anything. Some persons mentioned Narsi Ji's name to them and told them where his house was located, assuring them at the same time that they would get something good and nice there. Coming to Narsi Ji's place, they started dancing and singing. Narsi Ji told them "I am a mere Faqir and I possess nothing but the Lord's Bhakti. If you are seeking Bhakti, you can come to me after shaving your heads". They instantly had their heads shaved and joined Narsi Ji's company. Narsi Ji's two daughters and these two women singers used to remain engaged in singing the Lord's praise all the time.

The minister of the king of Júná Garh did not like the ways and conduct of Narsi Ji. He misled the king saying that this fellow (Narsi Ji) was an out and out liar and impostor and he should be driven out of the city, the more so as he was teaching people hypocrisy. Four of the king's soldiers came to take Narsi Ji to him. Narsi Ji told his two daughters and the two women singers "You stay here, I am going to the king". They said "What is there to be afraid of the king? We, too, shall accompany you". And so, all of them appeared at the king's court singing the Lord's praise,

Narsi Ji's greatness cast a spell on the entire court. But one Pandit asked "How is it proper to remain in the company of women all the time?" Narsi Ji replied "Bhakti is the essence of all the Shastras (scriptures), the Vedas and the Purans. Anybody who has Bhakti is a devotee, be that person a man or a woman. The company of such a person engenders Bhakti. Fie on the Gyán (sophistry) of a person and also on his knowledge of the Vedas and Shastras if he lacks Bhakti, for, he is averse towards the Lord. The Lord Himself has said that He is under the subordination of His devotees. If one has Bhakti, it would be against the Shastras to discriminate whether one is a man or a woman and whether the caste to which one belongs is high or low". Hearing this kind of reply from Narsi Ji, the entire Darbar (court) was silenced and the king was profoundly influenced.

Narsi Ji used to sing the Lord's praise regularly before His idol. When he used to sing the Rág Kedará (musical mode called Kedará), the Lord would make a gift of the garland from His own neck to Narsi Ji. The garland round the idol's neck would automatically come to Narsi Ji's neck. Once, Narsi Ji was in need of money for performing the Sewa of Sadhus. Mortgaging Rag Kedara, he borrowed money from a certain banker, promising that till he paid the money back, he would not sing Rag Kedara before the Lord. And when Narsi Ji discontinued singing Rag Kedara, the automatic transfer of the garland from the idol to Narsi Ji's neck stopped. This soon became known to all.

Persons hostile to Narsi Ji misled the king, saying that it was all a fairy tale that the garland was automatically transferred from the idol to Narsi Ji's neck ; actually, a too fine and weak thread was used in making the flower-garland which used to be put round the idol's neck, and it was by the sheer weight of the flowers that this thread broke. The king wanted to verify this.

Flowers were woven into a garland with a thick silk thread and the garland then put round the idol's neck. The

king then told Narsi Ji "Let me, too, see how the Lord puts the garland round your neck". Narsi Ji thereupon started singing the Lord's praise. He sang all the Rágas except Kedará. The Lord was neither pleased nor would He make a gift of the garland. Narsi Ji entreated Him repeatedly, saying the dishonour would ultimately be flung on Him and it was up to Him to protect the honour of this slave (Narsi Ji).

The Lord thereupon assuming the form of Narsi Ji, went to the banker with the money due to him. That wretched fellow was sleeping at that time. He very casually said that the money should be handed over to his wife and the bond signed by Narsi Ji taken away after getting it traced by his wife. The Lord in the guise of Narsi Ji was warmly received by the banker's wife and she paid obeisance to him. She then took back her husband's money and returned the bond. The reason why the banker's wife could have the Lord's Darshan was that she had once fervently prayed to Narsi Ji that he might be pleased to enable her to have His Darshan once. Narsi Ji had then promised to comply with her request. It was to fulfil this promise of His devotee Narsi Ji that the Lord created all this episode.

The Lord threw the bond which he had brought from the banker's wife on the lap of Narsi Ji. Seeing it, Narsi Ji's delight knew no bounds, and he then sang the Kedará Rág so sweetly that, while on other days, the garland used to be shifted on its own from the Lord's neck, on that particular day, the Lord put the garland round Narsi Ji's neck with His own hands.

A certain Brahman came to Juna Garh searching for the groom for a girl. Someone gave him Narsi Ji's address. The Brahman was very happy to see Narsi Ji's son and he at once applied Tilak to the boy's forehead, signifying that the engagement had been fixed. Narsi Ji told him "I am a poor man. Why do you not marry the girl in a rich family?"

The Brahman prayed fervently to Narsi Ji and left. When he told everything to the girl's father, the latter became very angry on hearing Narsi Ji's name. He said that he did not at all like the boy (Narsi Ji's son) and, hence, the match-maker should go back to Narsi Ji forthwith and cancel the engagement. The Brahman replied "You may cut off the finger with which I applied Tilak, but the engagement cannot be cancelled." The girl's father calmed down thinking that he would give such a large sum of money as dowry that Narsi Ji would turn a wealthy person.

When the day of marriage drew near, a letter specifying the auspicious moment was sent from the girl's side. Narsi Ji casually put it somewhere. He was not at all worried about the marriage, but remained lost in singing the Lord's praise as before. Only four days were left for the marriage. But even then, Narsi Ji would not bother about it. The Lord, ever affectionate to His devotee, mercifully came to Narsi Ji's house and started making all arrangements for the marriage. There were songs and instrumental music. Sweet-meats were prepared. Musical soirees were arranged. Feasts were held in which many guests joined. Jealous of Narsi Ji, people not merely ate till their tummies almost burst but took away with them packetfuls of sweet-meats and other delicacies. Then everything was set for the marriage party to start for the bride's place.

The Lord took Narsi Ji by the hand and told him "You, too, should accompany the marriage party. Though I shall be with you all the time incognito giving you all help and support, yet, openly, you should do and go on doing everything". Narsi Ji said "Maharaj ! It all depends on you and you alone know what to do. I can only sing your praise to the accompaniment of music. You can hold this function in any manner and on any scale you please." The Lord was reconciled to the idea that, save singing His praise, nothing more was to be expected of Narsi Ji. And so, He Himself

took charge of all arrangements. The marriage party soon reached the bride's city.

Before the marriage party was due to arrive, the bride's father sent a messenger with instructions to remind Narsi Ji that the day of marriage was drawing near and that he should come in time with his son and the few persons whom he chose to bring with him. But when the bride's people saw such a big marriage party before them they wondered and asked one another whose marriage party it could be. Those who were accompanying the marriage party told them that it was Narsi Ji Mahatma's. Hearing this, the bride's people were at their wit's end. They went to the bride's father and told him all about the glamour and splendour of the marriage party and its huge size. Thinking that Narsi Ji was only a pauper, the bride's father had made practically no arrangements for receiving the marriage party. He reprimanded those men saying "What is all this joke?" They replied "We are not joking. What we are saying is all true". The bride's father then sent the same Brahman who had applied Tilak to the groom's forehead to verify their statement. Seeing the marriage party, he was highly pleased, and on coming back, told the bride's father "The marriage party is so large that even on spending all your wealth, you will not be able to provide enough grass for the horses. In whichever direction you turn your eyes you will see a vast concourse of people making the party". Very much upset on hearing this, the bride's father himself went to have a look. Seeing the marriage party, he became worried and upset, his pride of wealth vanishing in no time. Realizing that it would be difficult for him to cope with the situation with honour and self-respect and accord a proper reception to the party, he fell at the feet of the Brahman who had applied Tilak to the groom's forehead. The Brahman then took him to Narsi Ji.

The bride's father touched Narsi Ji's feet, and with folded hands, begged of him to protect his honour. Narsi Ji

consoled him and said that the Lord would look after everything and make all arrangements for both sides and it was He who, in His mercy, had done so all this time. Indeed, the marriage was celebrated with a pomp and grandeur which beggars description.

Once Narsi Ji's caste-fellows told him that he should perform the Shrādh ceremony of his father and give a feast to all those who belonged to his caste. Narsi Ji remembered the Lord and all arrangements were soon complete. On the day of the Shradh ceremony, there was some shortage of Ghee (clarified butter) at the end. Narsi Ji went to the market with a vessel to bring Ghee. On the way, he met some Sadhus who were singing the Lord's praise. That was enough for Narsi Ji to forget all about the Ghee and he, too, joined them in singing the Lord's praise. His wife in the mean time had her gaze fixed on his way expecting him to return. The Lord Himself brought the Ghee to Narsi Ji's house in his guise.

Two Shabds (hymns) composed by Narsi Ji are given below.

(1)

Ferriest me across the ocean of existence my Lord.
Thou art the protector of the honour of Thy devotees.
Takest not into consideration my faults and blemishes ;
regardest me as Thy own. (1)

I am under the sway of passion, anger, egotism (pride),
avarice and infatuation, and have forgotten the True
Abode. I have now taken the refuge of Thy holy feet ;
forsakest me not now. (2)

Wandering all the time in Chaurási (cycle of eighty
four, I have not recognised Thee. I am being carried
away by the current of the ocean of worldly existence-
Savest me, O benevolent Shyám (Lord) (3)

I am crooked, lowly and sinful ; I do not utter Thy

name. Narsi's Lord is the redeemer of the vile and the lowly, this is what the Vedas and the Purans say. (4)

(2)

Where hast Thou been all this time, O Krishna ? I come from Gujrat and am a votary of Shiv Ji whom I worship day and night (1)

I have no idea of Bhakti and have made myself the laughing stock of all. (2)

I call out to Thee aloud. Please do listen to my prayer now. (3)

Hast Thou been accomplishing the task of Thy devotees somewhere or Thou hast been fast asleep ? (4)

O Narsi's Lord, the redeemer of the lowly ! Do save me this time. (5)

(51) S Ú R D Á S

Just as Tulsi Das Ji became immortal by singing of Ram's activities, so also did Súr Dás Ji earn undying fame by singing of the exploits of Sri Krishna in several thousand verses. Sur Das Ji was a contemporary of the Mughal emperor Akbar. So goes the saying that the emperor once invited him to his Darbár (court) at Fateh Pur Síkrí, but he did not go. This is what he said on that occasion :

What has a devotee to do in Síkrí ? Only one's shoes get worn out as one goes there and, in the mean time, one forgets the Lord's name. One has to pay obeisance to that very person, to see whose face is a sin. O Lord ! May Sur Das never have to do such a thing.

It appears that Sur Das Ji was born near about 1540 Vikram. In the book entitled "Eightyfour Vaishnavas", it has been written that he was a Brahman and his father's

name was Ram Das. His place of birth is uncertain. According to some, he was born in a village called Sihí near Delhi.

Sur Das Ji was not born blind. He became blind afterwards. According to the book "Eightyfour Vaishnavs" he used to live in 'Gaú Ghát' situated between Agra and Mathura.

In the battle which was fought between Mohammedans and his father, his six brothers were killed. He then started wandering from place to place. One day he fell into a well and remained confined there for six days. On the seventh day, Lord Sri Krishna appeared before him. Sur Das Ji prayed for the boon that with the eyes which had Darshan of the Lord, he might not have to see anything else afterwards and he might ever remain engaged in singing His praise. When Sur Das Ji came out of the well, he turned blind.

He took the vow to sing the Lord's praise in one lakh Shabds. But he left for his original abode when he had composed only twenty-five thousand of them. Sri Krishna Maharaj Himself composed the remaining seventy-five thousand Shabds, thereby fulfilling the vow of His devotee, and He then had all the Shabds bearing the name Sur Shyam as the author. The noble, Rahím Khán, was one of emperor Akbar's ministers. He was a scholar of Sanskrit and Hindi, and a poet, too. He collected Sur Das Ji's verses after searching for them at various places. He paid one Mohar (gold coin) for each verse. Out of greed, many people composed new verses and took them to Rahim Khan after putting Sur Das Ji's name as the author. When heaps of verses had collected, what was done was that after weighing out one authentic verse of Sur Das Ji, this verse was then used as the standard against which the new verses were checked on the balance. Either because the paper on which these new verses had been written was thicker or because the new verses were longer, they were not found to be of the

same weight as the authentic verse. All the verses composed by Sur Das Ji himself turned out to be of the same weight, no matter whether they were written on thick or thin paper or whether they were short or long.

Some also say that the emperor himself collected Sur Das Ji's verses. When their number reached two lakhs, he had them thrown into the fire. The new verses were all reduced to ashes. But no damage was done to any of the verses composed by Sur Das Ji himself. No matter which of the two versions is true, what is important is the greatness of "Súr Ságar" (name given to the compilation) and the influence it wielded on people in general. Even if the above two stories had not gained publicity, would the sun remain hidden ?

It is said that Sur Das Ji always used to have a scribe with him. He would write down whatever Shabd would come out from the mouth of Sur Das Ji. On several occasions, Lord Sri Krishna Himself acted as his scribe. One day Sur Das Ji felt that even before the words came out of his mouth, the scribe had already put them in writing, a feat which who but the Lord could perform ? As soon as this thought crossed his mind, he caught hold of the scribe's arm, but the Lord freed His arm from his grip and disappeared in a jiffy. At that very moment, the following couplet came out from Sur Das Ji's mouth :

Knowing me weak, Thou freest Thy arm from my grip
and runnest away. If Thou can escape from my heart,
then only shall I salute Thee as a hero.

It is said that Sur Das Ji was an incarnation of Uddhav Ji and a Sadhu from his very boyhood. At the age of eight, he went with his parents to Mathura where he continued to stay with a certain Sadhu. From Mathura, he went to Gaú Ghát which is situated between Mathura and Agra. There, he became the disciple of Ballabháchárya Mahá Prabhú with whom he went to Shri Náth Dwára where he left his mortal

coil at the age of eighty. He used to go from there to many other places now and then and in the course of one of his travels, he met Tulsi Das Ji and the two were together for some time. About Sur Das Ji's becoming blind, it is also said that he once became enamoured of a beautiful woman, as a result of which he felt so guilty that considering his infatuation with the woman to be the fault of his eyes, he pierced them with a stake.

Some selected Shabds (hymns) of Sur Das Ji.

(1)

Tears are flowing from my eyes day and night, After Shyám (Lord Krishna) left, it has been the rainy season with me at all times. (1)

The colyrium no longer sticks to my eyes and my hands as well as cheeks are all black. My jacket never dries and streams of tears are flowing down my bosom. (2)

My tears have turned into a river, my legs are tired and tottering and they get intertwined as I drag them on. Says Sur Das, Braj is sinking. Why do you not save it, O Krishna ? (3)

(2)

Without Gopal (Krishna), the groves have become hostidep. When he was here, the creepers were shady and cool, but now they are like heaps of burning grass. (1)

In vain does the Yamuna meander along, the birds sing, the lotus blooms and the black bees hum. (2)

Says Sur Das, his eyes have become red like the seeds of Abrus Precatorius looking expectantly at the Lord's way all the time. (3)

(3)

Mind not, O Lord, my faults and blemishes. You are known to be liberal and impartial. Ferry me across now. (1)

There is a river and there is also a drain full of dirty water. When the two meet and become of the same colour, they are also called the Ganges. (2)

Iron is offered in worship ; it is also used for killing. The touch-stone instantly turns both of them into gold, regardless of their merit or demerit. (3)

Says Sur Das, cast away, O Lord, this net of illusion in which all are caught, and ferry me across this time, for, otherwise you will be breaking your promise. (4)

(4)

Protect, O Lord, my honour. You, the knower of the innermost recesses of all, are well aware that I have made no spiritual endeavour at all. (1)

My evil tendencies do not forsake me even for a moment. Tying all worldly paraphernalia into a huge bundle, I am carrying it on my head. (2)

Attached to wife son and wealth, I have lost all sense and understanding. Redeem quickly, O Lord, this fallen Sur Das, whose boat is now full and about to sink. (3)

(5)

I am standing, O Lord, at Thy gate for a long time. Redeemest me like the other fallen ones Thou hath granted redemption. (1)

This has been Thy promise for ages. and that is why I am praying like this. It has been Thy promise for

ages that Thou shalt redeem the fallen ones. I have lost all sense of shame. I am the foremost of fallen ones and am second to none of them. That is why I am praying Thee to redeem me. (2)

Either admitest, Thou, this defeat or dost Thou fulfil Thy pledge. Verifiest, Thou, from the records if this fallen Sur Das is at all telling a lie. (3)

(6)

O Uddhav ! I do not forget even for a moment him who is not oblivious of me. I am mindful of him who remembers me, otherwise, I find not even a moment's peace. I cut asunder the nets entangling him for innumerable lives, and grant him happiness and bliss. (1)

The cunning Dushásan, taking his seat in the assembly of nobles, does wrong to Draupadi by pulling away her cloth. But as soon as she remembers me, I save her from her predicament. (2)

Dhruv and Prahlad remembered me day and night. I appeared in person to protect them and gave them abode in heaven.

In Mahá Bhárat, there is the story of the bird's egg on which the elephant's bell fell, thus saving it from being crushed. (3)

When Durvása came to Ambarish's house, ~~my~~^{my} Sudarshan Chakra (wheel) reduced him to ashes. Says Sur Das, "O Lord ! Thou emancipated the king-elephant. Have mercy on me". (4)

(7)

O Lord of the humble and the lowly ! It is now up to Thee to act. Remembering Thine pledge to redeem the fallen ones, savest me, Sur Das, who has gone astray. (1)

I spent my boyhood playing, and in my youth I remained lost in the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. Now, in old age, right understanding has dawned on me, therefore, in distress do I call out to Thee. (2)

My sons and brothers have forsaken me. My skin is getting separated from my body. My ears do not hear. My tired legs somehow drag me. Tears flow down my eyes. (3)

My hair have turned grey. Phlegm is blocking my throat. I have no peace by day or at night. Attachment and infatuation do not give up their cravings. They are the root causes of pain and suffering. (4)

Who is now going to remove all this suffering ? Says Sur Das, "O merciful Lord ! Thou alone can do it. No one else can". (5)

(8)

All days are not the same for anyone. One day, King Harish Chandra's palace abounded in mountains of treasures. On another day, he had to go to the Chandal's home and serve under him, collecting clothes from dead bodies prior to cremation. (1)

One day, a person is a bridegroom with a big procession accompanying him and with flags fluttering on poles stuck to the ground. On another day, the jungle is his abode, where he remains lying for ever with his legs stretched. (2)

One day Sítá was in tears in the painful setting of a lonely garden. On another day she in the company of Ram Chandra happily cruised in the air in a flower-chariot. (3)

One day, Yudhishtir was king, with Lord Krishna as his courtier. Another day, Draupadi, his wife, was stripped before his very eyes by Dushásan by pulling her cloth. (4)

These are all the fruits (results) of past Karmas, and so give up worrying, O ignorant mind. Says Sur Das, "How far can I describe the doings of the Providence whose ways are inscrutable ?" (5)

(9)

O mind, the day the Surat-bird flies away, all the leaves of the body-tree will fall. (1)

Your family members will say "Remove him forthwith, otherwise, turning a ghost, he will devour all." And your dearest one, too, with whom you were in deep love, will be scared on seeing you. (2)

Where is that cool lake now and where is all that glamour ? It is all dust blown by the wind. Your brothers, friends and relations will all lament, remembering you. (3)

Save Gopal, none else is your own. Your fame and worldly achievements will all be left behind here. He (Gopal) is scarce even to the gods and can be found only through Sat Sang. (4)

(10)

O foolish mind, you have spent this life in vain. Led by ego, you were happy enjoying worldly pleasures and did not take the refuge of Nam. (1)

This world is like the flower of the silkcotton tree and the parrot is attracted by its beauty. But when it pecks at its fruit, the cotton comes out and is blown away by the wind leaving nothing that the parrot can eat. The same is the fate of a man who expects anything from the world from which he gets nothing worthwhile ultimately. (2)

There is no use repenting now, O mind, for, you did not make the necessary efforts before. Says Sur Das,

if you do not remember Sat Nam, you are bound to repent afterwards, beating your head. (3)

(11)

The Surat of Sur Das secures ingress to a region where the melodious flute is audible. He reaches Nabh (sky, celestial region) where Anhad Shabd is resounding. As he hears it, the rust of impurity of the mind-mirror is removed. He drinks Amrit (nectar). (1)

His Surat knows the Truth and merges in the Sat Pad (region of Sants). Variegated spectacles are to be seen within. Pind and Brahmand are also within. (2)

Breaking open the firmament, his Surat soars high up like an Alalpakh*. It turns back and merges in true and pure form. In other words, it reaches the region of Akshar Purush. It goes still higher, beyond Akshar Purush, and gets Darshan (vision) of Nih-Akshar before whose splendour and grandeur, millions of Krishnas feel ashamed. (3)

Sur Das has realized the Truth, which is invisible and formless. He has found the abode of Sat Guru high up in the celestial region. The drop has merged in the ocean ; the Surat has merged in its source. (4)

(52) GOKUL NÁTH

Gusáin Gokul Náth was the grand son of Shri Ballabháchárya, He had great Bhakti and many good qualities. He was intelligent, calm and composed and contented. He used to talk sparingly. He had no duplicity. He possessed great sincerity. A certain wealthy man came to him to become his disciple and was ready to offer lakhs of rupees as Bhet. Gokul Nath Ji asked him "Do you have love and affection for anything or anybody ?" He said, No.

* A fabulous bird. It is said that it lays eggs in the sky, but the young birdie that comes out in the course of descent, flies up without touching the ground,

Thereupon Gokul Nath Ji told that rich person, "Seek some other Guru. Had you loved anything or anybody, your mind could be diverted from that direction and made to apply to the Lord. But since there is not even the seed of love and affection in your heart, how can the tree of Bhakti grow there ? A mind which is devoid of love and desire of any kind is like a hard stone".

(53) E K N Á T H

He was born near about 1590 Vikram. The star 'Múl' was on the ascendance at the time he was born, and as a result, the moment he was born, his father passed away. His mother, too, died after some time. From his very boyhood, he was highly intelligent and religious minded, and found peace and happiness in singing the Lord's praise. In 1602 Vikram, he became a disciple of Janárdan Pant, a Mahatma of Maháráshtra.

For some days, Janardan Soami entrusted Ek Nath with the task of maintaining accounts. One day, he could not account for one penny. He kept worrying till late hours at night. At last, when he discovered his mistake, he was overjoyed and clapped loudly. His Guru thereupon woke up, and asked him what made him so happy. In great humility, Ek Nath told him all about his mistake concerning one penny. His Guruji then said "If you could be so happy on discovering your mistake about one penny, how immensely happy will you be when you come to realize the very great mistake you have been committing relying on this world ? If you remain engaged in the Lord's thought and remembrance, do you think He will remain far from you ?" Ek Nath Ji placed his head at his Guru's feet, knowing what he had said constituted his blessings.

Important events of Ek Nath Ji's life are narrated below.

Ek Nath Ji used to go regularly to the river Godávarí for taking bath. On his way back, a certain Mohammedan

used to throw his mouth-wash at him. Hence he had to go for bath again. In this way, he had to take bath five to six times every day. One day, that Mohammedan crossed all limits. He threw his mouth-wash on Ek Nath's person one hundred and eight times, and Ek Nath Ji went back to the Godavari the same number of times for bath. Even then, his calm and cheerfulness remained unimpaired. Seeing this, that Mohammedan became very much ashamed and he fell at Ek Nath Ji's feet. There was a complete change in his life thereafter.

The Shrádth ceremony of Ek Nath Ji's father was held on a particular day. Food had been prepared and was ready to be served. Ek Nath Ji was waiting for the Brahmans to come. In the mean time a few persons belonging to a low caste appeared near his house. Getting the nice smell of delicious food, they began to say to each other "How sweet the smell is ! One feels hungry even if one had no appetite. But alas How can such good things fall to our wretched lot?" Ek Nath Ji overheard them. He fed those persons sumptuously and then gave them whatever food was left asking them to take that to their respective homes and feed their children. He had food prepared afresh for the Brahmans. But when the Brahmans came to know of all that had happened, they were very much displeased, and thinking that Ek Nath Ji had deviated from the path of virtue, they hurled many abuses at him.

After visiting Kashi (Varanasi), when Ek Nath Ji was going from Prayág (Allahabad) to Rámeshwar carrying Ganges water on a Kánwar (a bamboo pole with buckets slung at each end) he found on his way an ass dying of thirst on a barren field. Ek Nath Ji instantly took the Ganges water from his Kánwar and poured it into the mouth of the ass. His companions became very unhappy on seeing him putting holy Ganges water to this kind of use. Thereupon Ek Nath Ji said "The water from the Kánwar which quenched the thirst of the ass has gone straight to Shri Rameshwar Ji, drenching him." A great poet of Maharashtra has described

this act of Ek Nath Ji equally as virtuous as an act of feeding a lakh of Brahmans.

One night, four thieves entered Ek Nath Ji's house. They could lay their hands upon some clothes and utensils. They then started searching all over the place with a view to grabbing some more things. Coming near the room in which the idol had been installed, they found a lamp flickering inside, with Ek Nath Ji lost in deep meditation. The thieves turned blind. They stumbled and fell on the ground. Ek Nath Ji came out and asked who they were. They then started weeping and beseeching Ek Nath Ji for mercy, who passed his hands over their eyes as a result of which not only their eye-sight was restored but a complete transformation also took place in their outlook. Ek Nath Ji told them "Take away all these things. If you want anything else, you can take that, too." Ek Nath Ji even took out the rings from his fingers and gave them to the thieves. They became very much ashamed and gave up stealing.

(54) T U L S Í D Á S

Tulsí Dás Ji was born on the seventh day of bright half of Shrāvan in 1554 Vikram. He was born with thirtytwo teeth and did not cry as usual, at the time of birth. People were astonished on seeing this. They decided that only if the child survived three days, they would think of what to do with him. In the mean time, the condition of the mother became grave and she thought that she would die. She had the misgiving that they would throw away the child after her death. She accordingly, handed over the child to her maid-servant, Chuniá, who then left. The mother died the next morning. Chunia brought up the child for sixtyfive months, but, thereafter, she, too, died as a result of snake-bite. Tulsí Das Ji's father refused to accept the child who had spelt doom on the very person who had brought him up. And so, it was only by providence that the child survived.

Soami Nar Hariyá Nand received orders in a dream that he should give shelter to the child. He took the boy

with him, and gave him education in Ayodhyá for ten months, after which, he stayed in 'Shúkar Kshetra' at the confluence of the Sarajú and Ghághrá rivers for five years. It was there that he gave the boy lessons in Ram's exploits and activities. In the course of his travels from there, he reached Kashi and halted at the Panch Ganga Ghat (bathing place). A person well versed in the Shastras, called Shesh Sanátan, used to stay there. He took the boy from Nar Hariya Nand and gave him thorough lessons in the Shastras. Tulsi Das Ji stayed there for fifteen years. When his Guru passed away, he went to his native place, Rájápur (in Bándá district). A certain Brahman very enthusiastically married his daughter to Tulsi Das Ji.

Tulsi Das Ji had great love and attraction for his wife. One day, she went to her parents' house without informing him. He could not bear separation from his wife and went to her parents' place and met her there. Admonishing him, she uttered the following verse :

Are you not ashamed of coming here running ? Fie on this kind of love. What more can I say ? If you had the same love for Shri Ram as you have for my body which is a mere collection of bones and skin, you would have no fear in this world.

These words had such a profound effect on Tulsi Das Ji that he lost all interest in the world. His wife beseeched him a lot and entreated him to take food, but he turned a deaf ear to her pleadings. Wandering from place to place, he reached Kashi where he wrote many books. He left his mortal coil on a Saturday which was the third day of the dark half of Shrávan in 1680 Vikram.

Tulsi Das Ji used to regularly go to the forest to ease himself. On his way back, he would pour on the roots of a tree whatever was left of the water which he used to take with him in a vessel for washing purposes. A certain ghost who lived there used to have his thirst quenched by the

water so poured. Pleased with Tulsi Das Ji, the ghost one day bade him ask for anything that he wanted. Tulsi Das Ji thereupon told the ghost "Enable me to have Ram Chandra Ji's Darshan." The ghost replied, "I do not have that power. But I can give you one clue. Discourses on Rámáyan are regularly held at such and such place. One ugly fellow whose very look strikes terror in one's heart and engenders hate, comes first and goes last. He is Hanumán. You seek his help firmly and with determination. He can enable you to have Ram Chandra Ji's Darshan." Tulsi Das Ji did as directed. Hanuman Ji told him that he could have Ram Chandra Ji's Darshan in Chitrakút.

Tulsi Das Ji, accordingly, went to Chitrakút. One day as he was wandering in the forest, he saw two princes speeding away on horse-back. He was charmed by their grace and beauty but could not recognize them. In the mean time, Hanuman Ji appeared before him and asked him "Did you see anything?" Tulsi Das Ji replied "Yes, I saw two handsome princes." Hanuman Ji broke forth "It is they who are Ram and Lakshman."

One night some thieves entered Tulsi Das Ji's house but could not steal anything. They found one person on guard with bow and arrows. They again came next night, but found the same person keeping vigil. They asked Tulsi Das Ji in the morning "Who is that person who guards your place at night with bow and arrows in hand?" Tulsi Das Ji could immediately understand who he was. He thought that the Lord had to keep awake the whole night for the sake of the few trivial things that he had and this must be very troublesome for Him. Thus thinking, he instantly gave away all that he had. When the thieves saw this, they felt very guilty at heart. They gave up stealing and adopted the Lord's Saran (refuge).

A certain Brahman died. His wife came to pay obeisance to Tulsi Das Ji. The words "May you enjoy eternal wifeness" came out from Tulsi Das Ji's mouth. That

woman thereupon submitted "Maharaj ! My husband is lying dead, and I am about to become a Sati (a woman who burns herself on the funeral-pyre of her husband). How is eternal wifehood possible for me ?" Tulsi Das Ji brought back her husband to life, after making her vow to perform the Lord's Bhakti.

It is said that Tulsi Das Ji was an incarnation of Válmiiki Ji, and there can be no doubt that Tulsi Das Ji's "Ram Charit Mánas" (Rámáyan) in Hindi is in no way less charming than Valmiki Ji's Ramayan in Sanskrit ; rather, the general public has been much more benefitted by Tulsi Das Ji's book than Valmiki Ji's Ramayan. For about thirty years, Tulsi Das Ji was a contemporary of Sur Das Ji. Nabhá Ji (the author of Bhaktmál) was a great friend of Tulsi Das Ji who met Malúk Das Ji, too, once. Tulsi Das Ji visited such places of pilgrimage as Mathura, Brindaban, Kurukshetra, Prayag, Chitrakut, Jagannath Puri, Soron, etc. but he stayed mainly in Kashi and it was there that he left his mortal coil. 'Ram Charit Manas' is the most famous of his books. Some selected verses and hymns composed by him are given below.

Like the little gunpowder in the cartridge of a gun, a minute grain of Rám Nám reduces to ashes crores of mountains of sin. (1)

Says Tulsi Das Ji "Utter Ram Nam for that will eradicate your sin however great, just as the rope used for drawing water from the well cuts through the stone-axle over which it passes by the friction of constant pulling. (2)

Says Tulsi Das Ji "Even if Ram's name is uttered by a person hypocritically, the leather of the shoes he wears is as good as the skin of my body". (3)

Ram Nam is much superior to Nirgun Brahm. Infinite is the power of Nam. Nam is much superior to even Ram, according to my understanding. (4)

Says Tulsí Das Ji that the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati, and the seven oceans may all be full of water, yet, if there is no Swánti rain, they are all useless in the estimation of the Chátak. (5)

The Chatak teaches its young one not to take any water other than Swanti rain and also tells the birdie that its family tradition is to cherish affection for Swanti rain alone. (6)

The fowler (hunter) shoots the Papíhá and it falls on the holy Ganges. But it keeps its beak closed and does not drink the water, for, it would be a disgrace if it did, as it would break its vow in that case. (7)

Says Tulsí Das Ji, even if one has to face a crore of obstacles and calamities and a crore of enemies, no harm will be done to one if one is blessed with Raghu Nath's (Ram's) benign glance. (8)

Says Tulsí Das Ji that he does not care for either the auspicious moment or the power of Yoga but firmly believes that if Ram is on one's side, all will be helpful to one. (9)

Verily does the Papiha belong to a high caste, for it would never drink water stored below, on the ground. It would either have water directly from the dark clouds above or suffer because of thirst. (10)

Says Tulsí Das Ji "I have neither knowledge nor physical power, nor even any money. You protect the honour of an insignificant worm like me, O Ram". (11)

Keep on one pan of the balance the happiness of seven heavens and of redemption. Even then they will not equal the happiness of a moment's Satsang. (12)

Says Tulsí Das Ji, "Remember Ram every moment and make no delay, for one's life-breath escapes like a shooting arrow from the bodyquiver". (13)

What will you gain by wandering in the forest if your task is not accomplished ? Says Tulsí Das Ji that, slowly and gradually, you will achieve your goal staying at home itself. (14)

Like the well hiding its shadow within itself, a friend does not talk of the shortcomings of his friend to outsiders. (15)

Says Tulsí Das Ji that he who seeks his own fame and ignores the good name of others will have his face blackened by dark ink which will not be removed however much he may try to wash it away. (16)

Of what value is the knowledge of Hindi or Sanskrit ? One should have the riches of Truth. It is the ordinary blanket that is of use. What will you do with a costly shawl ? (17)

There is no happiness in either good food or elegant dress or progeny. Even sinners have them. Says Tulsí Das Ji, two things are rare, namely, association with Sants and the wealth of Ram Nam. (18)

A hero fights and struggles for spiritual advancement without bragging before others. He squarely faces the foe in the battle that is raging now. The coward only raves and laments. (19)

It is better to understand than to fight, and to lose than to win. And it is also better to be robbed oneself than to rob others. (20)

Says Tulsí Das Ji, one gets help and support only in accordance with Providence. One either goes towards such support on one's own, or, the support itself comes to one. (21)

SHABD (1)

Thou art merciful ; I am humble and lowly. Thou art benevolent ; I am a beggar. I am a notorious sinner ; Thou eradicatest heaps of sin. (1)

Thou art the protector of orphans (helpless ones). Who is a more wretched orphan than myself ? There is none so poor and destitute as I am, and there is none equal to Thee in eradicating destitution. (2)

Thou art Brahm, and I am only an insignificant Jiva. Thou art the Lord and I am Thy servant. Thou art my father, mother and friend. Thou dost me good in every way. (3)

I am related to Thee in umpteen ways. Acceptest me in any way Thou likest. Says Tulsi Das Ji that may he get the Saran of the merciful Lord's holy feet somehow or the other. (4)

SHABD (2)

I have heard that the Lord purifies the fallen ones. I am such a fallen one and Thou art, O Lord, the purifier. This is a nice coincidence. (1)

The Shastras cite the evidence of the hunter, the harlot, the elephant and Ajámil. Thou hast redeemed many other sinners, whose number is legion. (2)

Whether anybody takes Thy name knowingly or unknowingly, he escapes hell and Yam's abode. Says Tulsi Das Ji "I have taken refuge under Thee, O Lord, protectest Thou my honour." (3)

(55) R A S K H Á N

Ras Khán was a Mohammedan, who used to remain engrossed in worldly pursuits. He loved the son of a certain trader dearly. One day he overheard some persons saying to each other that one's love for God should be like that of Ras Khán for the trader's son. When he asked those persons how God looked like, they showed him a picture of Sri Náth Ji. His past Sanskar (potential for spiritual development) was instantly awakened. He lost interest in the trader's son and came to Brindában. Seeing his sincere renunciation

and yearning, Gosain Vitthal Nath Ji took him in his fold, totally disregarding the fact that he was a Mohammedan.

The saying also goes that Ras Khan was attracted towards a woman who was, however, very proud and vain-glorious. She always used to reject his offers of love. One day he was reading a Persian translation of Bhágwat which contained an account of the yearning of the cowherdesses of Brindaban. It struck him that he should rather love the one for whom thousands of those cowherdesses were dying. Spurred by this idea, he left that woman and went to Brindaban.

He used to don the garb of a Vaishnav and also wear many garlands. For this reason, he came to be known as Ras Khán Málá Dhári, i. e., Ras Khan, the wearer of garlands. Lost in devotion to the Lord Krishna, he has composed many beautiful verses which are permeated through and through with Bhakti, love and emotion and, hence, they are held in high esteem by the Vaishnavs. 'Prem Bátiká' and 'Suján Ras Khan' are his only two books which have been published so far.

In one of his verses he has written that if I have to be a piece of stone, I would like to be that of the Giri Ráj (a celebrated hill in Brindaban) ; if I must be born an animal I would prefer to be a cow of Nand Rái (king Nand, Shri Krishna's adopted father) ; if I get the human form, I would like to be a cow-herd of Braj ; and if I am to be a bird, I wish to be one inhabiting the trees of Braj.

Tired of probing through the Vedas, the Purans, the Upanishads etc., Ras Khan ultimately says :

I have searched for Brahm in the forest of the Purans and have listened to the hymns of the Vedas with great attention. But nowhere have I heard or seen how Brahm looks like and what his nature is. I, Ras Khan, became tired of searching. Neither men nor women could give me any clue. At last I found him hiding

in the groves of Brindaban, pressing gently Radhiká's feet.

(56) N Â B H Á

He lived during the seventeenth century Vikram and, according to his disciple Priya Das Ji, died in 1700 Vikram. Priya Das Ji has written that, as per his Guru's command, he prepared his annotation on his Guru's main book, "Bhaktmál Chhand Band" (Bhaktmal, poetry), after his demise. However, in the book 'Mishra Bandhu Vinod', it has been stated that Nábhá Jí died near about 1720 Vikram. His name was Nárayan Das. It is said that he was born blind. There is considerable difference of opinion about the caste to which he belonged. However, on several grounds, it appears that he was born in a low-caste family. Nabha Ji was a disciple of Agra Das and a great friend of Gosain Tulsi Das Ji.

In the south, in the region called Tailang near the river Godavari, there is a mountain known as Ram Bhadráchal. Shri Ram Chandra Ji stayed there for some time during his exile in forest. It was there that Nabha Ji was born to a singer called Ram Das. Famine broke out after his father's death. His mother left him in a forest, which was noticed by the devotees Kilh Das Ji and Agra Das Ji. They sprinkled water on the child's eyes, whereupon his eyes opened. After ascertaining his whereabouts, they took him to Galtá (in the then princely state of Jaipur). Agra Das Ji gave him the name Narayan Das after making him his disciple, whose inner eyes soon opened as a result of regularly taking the Prashad of Sadhus.

One day Agra Das Ji was lost in deep meditation. At that very time, the ship of a certain merchant was about to sink, and soon as he had a vision of this imminent catastrophe, his meditation was interrupted. Nabhaji became aware of the wandering of Agra Das Ji's mind and broke forth "Maharaj ! The ship has been saved. Be careful in your meditation". Agra Das was very much pleased and told

Nabha Ji “You should sing the glory of those Sadhus, on taking whose Prashad, this kind of realization has dawned on you”. Following his Guru’s command, Nabha Ji wrote “Bhakt Mal” in verse form giving accounts of the hallowed lives and teachings of devotees of all the four Yugas (ages).

Vaishnav Priya Das Ji, who belonged to the Mádhwa sect, prepared the annotation of “Bhakt Mál” in 1769 Vikram. Thereafter, Lálá Lál Ji Dás translated it into Persian in 1823 Vikram and gave the name “Bhaktorvashi” to the Persian translation. He belonged to Kándhlá and his name was Lakshman Das. He got the benefit of Satsang in Mathura district and became a votary of the order owing allegiance to Hit Hari Bans Ji. He was given the name Lál Ji Das.

A second translation has been made by some other person. A third translation was brought out in 1908 Vikram by Lálá Gumání Lál Káyasth who belonged to Rohtak. A fourth translation, involving much labour was made from original Bhaktmál and its annotation in 1913 Vikram by Lálá Tulsí Rám Agrawál of Ambálá district, who used the medium of Urdu, interspersed here and there with charming Persian words. The title ‘Bhaktmál Pradípan’ was given to this translation. In 1923, Íshwarí Pratáp Rái transliterated this translation into Dev Nágrí script.

A Shabd composed by Nabha Ji is given below.

Nabha Ji says, I play in the Nabh (sky) and move about happily in the Kanwal (Sahas-dal-Kanwal). I cleanse the mind and the eye-mirror. Kal feels ashamed. Above the lotus of two petals, i. e., above the third Til, lightning is flashing every moment, and the Jyoti (flame) is visible. (1)

Beyond And, my Surat sees the beautiful Sunn, which is the essence of the creation below. Surat rushes to the fortress and merges in Shabd. (2)

These are esoteric spectacles, which cannot be described, nor can they be compared with anything else. The

stream has merged in the ocean. In the ocean, water and its waves are one and the same. Similarly Guru (Master) and Chelá (disciple) are one there. (3)

I have subdued my mind and gladly taken Guru's Prashad (sanctified food), which is difficult to get and which opened my inner eye. What I saw, has made me happy beyond description. (4)

(57) A MAHATMA WITH A WOODEN TONGUE

He was a Sarjúpári Brahman by caste and was born in Kashi (Varanasi) in 1834 Vikram. He got married in Kashi itself, but because of a strong feeling of renunciation growing in him, he left his family and adopted Sannyás (asceticism), and came to be known as Dev Tírtth Swami, thereafter.

He was well versed in the Shastras. Once he had a quarrel with his Guru, in atonement of which, he got a wooden cover fixed on his tongue, and thereby stopped speaking for all times. He used to communicate himself with others by writing on a wooden plank. He would take only green vegetables and leaves. He initiated Maharaja Ishwari Prasad Narayan Singh of Varanasi. He left his mortal coil on the twelfth day of the dark half of Kuár in 1909 Vikram at an age of about 75 years. He wrote "Vinayámrit" and several small books. Some verses composed by him are given below.

(1)

I have seen no one who is pure at heart and sincere. Their sincerity is filtered as it were, through a lattice screen. I found some like a cat and others like a duck, though all of them don the cloak of a Faqir. Outwardly, they utter words of Gyan, but in reality, they are no better than the useless skin of a fruit. (1)

They are very sloth to utter the Lord's name, like one tired after a long walk. They are apt and clever in grinding others in a mill. (2)

Though not much learned, yet they are very proud of their intellect. They would utter harsh and venomous words ; as if a snake is coming out of its hole. (3)

Without remembering the Lord, all Jap (repetition of names of various deities) and Tap (penance) are false and useless, and the hope of attaining eminence (spiritual progress) is far fetched. What can one say of such people ? They have not found a Guru who knows the secret of the inner eye. (4)

(2)

O disciple ! Ponder in your heart as to what should be done and what you are actually doing. You think you yourself are responsible for your good qualities, and you blame the Lord for your blemishes. (1)

Leaving your own true religion, you accept the worthless religion of others. You are in a state of stupor because of a peculiar intoxication with things worldly, and you are not afraid of the Lord. (2)

Of what use will they be to you, for whose sake you are running your life and whatever you possess ? You will have to pay their debt. (3)

You may worship any deity and practise any religion, nevertheless, you cannot escape recurrent births and deaths. O dear, your object will be fulfilled only by uttering Ram Nam. (4)

(3)

I repent all the time. Getting nice dress, worldly companions and all worldly objects, I am letting a priceless treasure slip away from my hands. (1)

Without Satsang, I am allowing this human form and this beautiful body to languish and perish. (2)

You recite Shastras before others and teach them their

contents, but yourself remain engrossed in worldly pleasures. (3)

Life after life, you are being tied down by variegated strings of Karma. (4)

Why do you never try to understand that you are getting more and more entangled every day ? (5)

Realizing that the knowledge of the way to everlasting salvation is pure, I wear it as a garland round my neck, i. e., I wholeheartedly accept that way. (6)

I always pray to the Lord that I may ever remain linked with Him. (7)

(58) BAN KHANDÍ MAHÁRÁJ

Shri Ban Khandí Maháráj was a famous Mahatma, who had his Ashram (hermitage) in Sukkhur (Sind). He was born on the seventh day of the bright half of Chait in 1820 Vikram in Kurukshetra in the family of Ram Chandra who used to be regarded as a jewel amongst Brahmans. Ban Khandi Maharaj's family name was Bhál Chandra. His father had promised that if a son was born to him, he would dedicate the boy to the Sewa (service) of Sants. Accordingly, Bhál Chandra received initiation from Swami Melá Ram Ji at the age of ten.

Once the king of Patiálá, Karam Singh, came to his Guru, Mela Ram Ji, to have his Darshan. The king was astonished to see the striking beauty and shapeliness of Bhal Chandra's body and his remarkable Brahmcharya (celibacy). With the permission of Guru Mela Ram Ji, he took the boy home to enable his queens to have a look at him. The queens were charmed to see his surpassingly handsome body which was also the very emblem of renunciation. According to the Guru's command, Bhal Chandra was to return to his Ashram (hermitage) at night. But the queens wanted to detain him for the night at the palace so that they could perform his Sewa. Hence, Bhal Chandra quietly slipped

away at night all alone. The king thereupon became very much upset and worried. He had a search made for him in the forest with torches, when he was found sitting calmly in the forest, lost in deep meditation. From that time he came to be known as 'Ban Khandi' (one whose abode is the forest).

After having performed Guru's Sewa and practised Yoga up to the age of twenty years, he went to Gangá Ságar for ablution there, visiting on his way Hardwár, Mathura, Ayodhya, Prayag, Kashi, Nepal and Badrinath. Thereafter, he went in the direction of Assam and reached there to have Darshan of Kámákshá Deví. Human sacrifices used to be made before the Devi in those days. Thinking Ban Khandi to be a suitable person for sacrifice, the priests caught hold of him, but he escaped from their clutches by dint of his Yogic power. This struck terror in the priests' hearts. Ban Khandi Ji asked them to have no fear and ordered them to see to it that no human sacrifice was made at that place afterwards.

From there, he went to Jagannath Ji and, then to Rameshwar. Thereafter, he reached Hyderabad (Sind), visiting Bombay, Gujrat and Kathiawad on the way. People of these places were astonished to see his Yogic power, brilliant personality and greatness. Later on, he established the place of pilgrimage called 'Sádh Belá' in Sukkhur (Sind).

He had predicted his date of departure from this world much earlier. He lived for more than one hundred years and left his mortal coil on the second day of the dark half of Asárh in 1920 Vikram.

(59) TAILANG SWAMI

There was a famous Mahatma in Kashi, called Tailang Swami, about eightyfive years ago. He had attained supreme perfection in Yoga. He would remain stark naked all the time. He knew of the present, the past and the future and would answer questions any visitor would have in his mind

without his telling anything about them. To him, land or water, honour or dishonour, summer or winter meant no difference. To sit in 'Padmásan' on the surface of water, to remain submerged in the Ganges continuously for three days, to know in a state of conscious self-absorption of events occurring at distant places, all these feats were commonplace with him. He left his mortal coil when 280 years old.

He was born in a well-to-do Brahman family in the month of Paus in 1664 Vikram in the village Viziáná in south India. He used to be called Shiv Ram then. He had razor-sharp intellect. From his very boyhood, he gave evidence of a spirit of renunciation and an inclination towards spiritual development. By the time he had attained youth, an utter indifference towards the world could be clearly noticed in him. His father had already died. His mother had brought him up with great love and affection and it was his mother's instructions that provided him encouragement towards spiritual development all the time. His mother passed away twelve years after his father's death. He was 48 years old then. He then found himself free from all worldly entanglements, and did not return home after performing the last rites of his departed mother. He entrenched himself at the very place where fire had been applied to the funeral pyre of his mother and a cottage, too, was built for him there, later on.

He performed hard penance at that place for twenty years, after which, he went from place to place in search of some great saint. He was fortunate to have the Darshan of Bhagirath Swami, from whom he received initiation. His Guru, too, departed from this world two years later.

After visiting several places, he ultimately reached Rameshwaram. Thereafter, he remained engaged in spiritual practices in Nepal, Mán Sarovar, the banks of the river Narmada, Prayag and many other places. As soon as his fame spread at any particular place, he would leave it and go somewhere else. At the end, he reached Kashi,

People in Kashi talk of many miracles performed by Tailang Swami. After a boat full of men and women had sunk in Prayag due to a cyclone, he salvaged it from the river-bed. A certain British officer had him imprisoned because of his remaining naked all the time. The next morning, it was seen that though the prison-cell in which he had been lodged was still under lock and key, he was strolling outside with a smile on his face. When he was asked about the matter, his reply was "One's life (real self) cannot be confined within the four walls of a room by merely locking one up there ; if that were possible, a person could be saved from the cruel hands of death by locking him up in a prison-cell."

He left his mortal coil on the eleventh day of the bright half of Paus in 1944 Vikram. As per his instructions, his dead body taken in a box was allowed to drift away in the mid-current of the river Ganges.

PART 3

DEVOTEES OF MUSLIM COUNTRIES

(60) A D Í S K A R N Í

His name was Adís. Since he belonged to Karan, he came to be called Karní. Karan is a part of Yemen, in Arabia.

Once he had no food for three days at a stretch. On the fourth day, he came out of his place of residence, and as he was going on the road, he found a one rupee coin lying before him. He did not pick it up, thinking that somebody might have dropped it and was searching for it. He then thought of eating some grass to appease his hunger. At that very moment, he found a goat coming towards him with a piece of hot bread in its mouth. The goat dropped the bread before him, but he would not even touch it, thinking that it was somebody else's and the goat had picked it up and brought it there. The goat thereupon told him "I am the slave of the same Lord whose slave you also are". At this, he picked up the bread and ate it, and the goat vanished.

The dress he used to wear was always old and in a tattered condition. People, therefore, used to think that he was mad and children used to pelt him with bricks and stones. He used to tell them "Hit me with small pieces of stone, so that no blood comes out. I am not afraid of being wounded, but what I am scared of is this that if the wound is too severe, that might hamper and stand in the way of my repeating the Lord's Name and paying obeisance to Him".

Some of Adís Karní's sayings

When you go to bed, think that death is standing by your head, and while you are awake, think that it is before you. You, I and, indeed, the whole world are destined to die. Be satisfied and contented with what

you have, so that while remembering the Lord and paying obeisance to Him, your attention is not diverted to any other direction. If three things, viz., good food, elegant dress and association with wealthy persons are to a man's liking and dear to him, hell is as near him as it could be.

(61) H A Z R A T K H W Á J Á H A S A N B A S R Í

He was born in 641 A. D. in Madíná. He was extremely good-looking. Seeing his charming figure, Hazrat Fárúq had said "This boy is very handsome, and he should, therefore, be called Hasan".* Since he belonged to Basrá, he came to be known as Hasan Basrí.

Hasan Basri was a jeweller, and he used to be called Hasan Maulvi. One day, it so happened that he had to go to Asia Minor. There, he met the minister of that place. The minister said "I am going somewhere, would you like to come with me?" Hasan Basri readily agreed. When he reached a forest in the company of the minister, he found a beautiful tent pitched up there and a troop of well armed soldiers was coming after having circumambulated the tent. Thereafter, he found some nobles and aristocrats proceeding in the direction of the tent and then returning after going round it. Likewise, scholars and philosophers went and then came back. After them, two hundred beautiful women went with jewels and treasures in their hands and then returned. Last of all, the emperor himself and his minister went and then came back. Hasan Basri pondered a lot over the matter but could not make out anything. He then asked the minister who gave the following reply.

The son of the emperor of Rúm (Asia Minor) had died and his grave is inside the tent. We all visit the tent once in a year and do as you saw us doing, and then leave. First,

* From the Persian word 'Hasin', meaning handsome.

soldiers circumambulate the tent, after which they say "O prince ! If the condition in which you are can be done away with by waging a war, we are all ready to fight. But the issue rests with the one with whom nobody can engage in a battle or fight." After the soldiers, scholars and philosophers visit the tent and say "O prince ! If death could be prevented through learning, intellect and diplomacy, we would have tried our best." Then, old men go to the tent and say "If your condition could be changed by weeping and lamenting or by making entreaties and recommendations, we could try, but no recommendations would be of any avail before the one who governs death and, for that matter, both life and death." Thereafter, beautiful damsels go and say "O prince ! If our beauty and charm or wealth and treasures could save you from death, we are prepared to sacrifice them all. But this matter rests with the Supreme Father, who is the Lord of all, and who does not at all care for these perishable things." Finally, the emperor says "O my dear son ! For your sake, I have brought here soldiers, scholars, intellectuals, diplomats, aristocrats, wealthy persons, the most beautiful women as well as wealth, treasures and gems, and I, too, have come personally. If your condition could be changed and if it were within my power to prevent death, I would have tried to the best of my ability. But the matter rests with Him before whom not only your father but the whole world dwindles into insignificance and is worthless, meriting no consideration at all. Therefore, may you be in peace for another year."

Hearing this account, Hasan Basri thought within himself

If one seeks the Lord and simultaneously this wretched world too, both cannot go together. That would be only wishful thinking and sheer madness.

After this incident, Hasan Basri developed the spirit of renunciation and, giving away all his wealth and property to the poor and destitute, he started living all alone, aloof from worldly people. He practised great penance and undertook

many fasts. No one ever saw him smiling after the above incident. But, of course, he used to weep a lot for his Beloved.

Hazrat Rábaa's name is well known. She too was a contemporary of Hasan Basri. Rather, it should be said that she was one of the foremost disciples of Hasan Basri. Eminent people in large numbers used to come to his Satsang, but if Hazrat Rábaa could not be present on any day, he would not deliver discourses on that day. Someone asked him "How is it that you do not at all speak out only because a certain woman is absent?" He replied "How can I pour into the mouths of ants the Sharbat (syrup) which has been made over to me for giving it to elephants to drink?"

Somebody remarked "Your Satsang attracts large crowds. This must be a pleasant experience with you" Hasan Basri said in reply "No. But if some true seeker or devotee or one with deep yearning comes, then, of course, I feel happy."

Many people would submit to him "What can we do? Our mind has gone to sleep. What you say does not produce any effect on it." In reply, he would say "Your mind is dead. One can give a shake to a sleeping person and awaken him. But a dead person cannot be awakened."

Once he told somebody "Never do three things : First, never go near kings and emperors. Second, never sit with a woman if no one else is nearby, no matter whether she is one like Rábaa or whether you teach her in a mosque how to recite Quran. Third, do not get your ears habituated to music and fun. These three things are fraught with danger."

A certain old man has said "Once as I was going on Haj (pilgrimage) with Hasan Basri, I felt very thirsty on the way. I found a well, but there were no bucket, rope etc. nearby. Hasan Basri told me that he would say Namáz (prayer) and I should drink water in the mean time. And so,

he started praying and, as he did that, water from the well came right up to its mouth. All those who were with us drank water to their heart's content. When one of them wanted to fill his pitcher, the level of water instantly went down. Hasan Basri thereupon said that it was a pity that people have no reliance on God."

Once Hasan Basri asked a boy who was going with a lamp, "Where is this light from?" The boy put out the lamp and shot back "First you tell me where has that light gone now?"

Some of Hasan Basri's instructions

Those who talk of others' affairs to you must be talking of yours to them.

A Satsangi brother is more dear to one than one's own son, for, the Satsangi brother is one's friend in matters spiritual, while one's son is one's friend in worldly affairs.

One notices ten attributes in a dog which are less readily found in a human being. Hence, a dog is a thousand times better than a man in whom these things are lacking. The first is that a dog usually starves, and to starve is the sign of a person who has control over his senses. Secondly, a dog does not have any place of its own where it can stay. This is the sign of one who is contented. Thirdly, a dog sleeps sparingly at night. This is the sign of a person who keeps awake at night and remains engaged in spiritual practices at that time. Fourthly, when a dog dies, it does not leave behind any property over which there can be a quarrel between its successors. Fifthly, a dog is never unfaithful to its master, no matter how angry he is with it and how severely he belabours it. This is the sign of a true devotee and disciple. Sixthly, a dog takes its seat at a distance from others and at a very ordinary and unimportant place. This is the sign of those who are alert and mindful in entertaining guests. Seventhly, if a dog is removed from the place where it used to sit or lie down, it quietly goes to some other

place and takes its seat there. This is the sign of those who conform to the Mauj (Will) and pleasure of the Lord. Eighthly, if, after belabouring a dog, a piece of bread is thrown to it and it is called in an endearing tone, it instantly comes forward wagging its tail, without minding at all the displeasure which one gave vent to earlier. This is the sign of humility. Ninthly, when a dog's master sits down for dinner, it sits down at a distance and watches him. This is the sign of persons of good manners. Tenthly, when a dog leaves a place or goes away from there, it never again thinks of that place. This is the sign of persons who have no attachment for anything.

(62) M A L I K B I N D Í N Á R

He belonged to Damascus and was extremely handsome. Once he had a hot discussion with an atheist, which continued for a long time. Ultimately, it was decided that both of them should thrust their hands into raging fire and he, whose hand is burnt, would be taken as wrong. So, this is what was done but the hand of neither of the two burnt. People started saying that both were right. Malik Bin Dínár became very sad and dejected thinking that even after remembering the Lord's Name and paying obeisance to Him for full seventy years, he ultimately proved to be on the same footing as an atheist. A voice from heaven was heard saying "You do not know that it was only because of your own blessed hand that the atheist's hand did not burn. Had he alone put his hand in the fire, it would have burnt, instantly."

Malik Bin Dinar has said "Outwardly, we worship the Lord and seek help and succour from Him but, actually, even in petty matters, we look to others and seek their help and support".

Once a certain woman called him a cheat. He thereupon said "For twenty years, nobody has accosted me by my true name. But you have found out who I am."

He has said that if a person feels greater pleasure in

enjoying idle talks with people than in singing the Lord's praise and paying obeisance to Him, his life is wasted, his knowledge is poor and his mind is steeped in darkness.

(63) MOHAMMED W Á S A

He used to take dry bread soaked in water and would say that one who remained contented with such diet, would not at all care for the world.

He said "Lucky is he who gets up in the morning hungry and goes to bed hungry, for, in that case, the Lord's attention is directed towards him and his towards the Lord." He has said "To take care of one's tongue is much more difficult than to take care of wealth and property."

Somebody asked him "How are you doing?" He asked back "What could be the condition of a person whose span of life is getting reduced day by day whilst his sins piling up?"

A certain person asked him "Do you know the Lord?" For some time, he remained sitting with head hanging low and kept mum. Thereafter, he said, "He who has recognized Him, would talk very little of Him."

He has said that living on a moderate scale is better.

(64) H A Z R A T H A B Í B A J M Í

He was a rich and wealthy person. He used to do money-lending business and earned interest from his debtors. He would go to them everyday for demanding principal or interest. If they could not pay him, he would charge them the cost of his travel each way. One day it so happened that a certain debtor was not in his house. His wife said "My husband is not at home and I, too, have no money with me with which I can repay some part of the loan taken from you. I have, of course, some vegetables with me." Habīb Ajmī took them and came back home. He told his wife "I have got these vegetables in lieu of interest ; cook them."

His wife, thereupon, said "I have no wheat flour and firewood with me." He replied "Very well, I am going again and shall bring those things too, as substitutes for interest." As soon as cooking was finished and the food was ready, some beggar called at his door. Habib Azmi answered his call exclaiming "Go away ; you will roll in affluence and I shall become a Faqir (pauper)." Afterwards, when his wife inserted a spoon into the pot containing the vegetable-curry for taking it out, she found that it had turned into blood. Taken aback, she quipped at her husband "See the result of your niggardliness." Looking at the pot, he felt great burning at heart and repented a lot.

The next day as he went on his routine rounds, he told his debtors that he would forego all interest and they should only pay the principal back. Some boys were playing on the road. On seeing him, they started saying "Step aside, for Habib, the usurer, is coming, and if the dust of his feet falls on us, we may become sinners like him." Hearing this, his heart ached, and without thinking of anything else, he went straight to Hasan Basri's Satsang. It so happened that what he heard there added fuel to the fire raging within his heart. He again repented sincerely and then returned. He met the same boys on his way back. Seeing him, they started saying "Step aside, for Habib is coming and if the dust of the feet of sinners like us falls on him, he, too, will become a sinner." Hearing this, he felt another blow on his heart.

Returning home, he gave back all the things he had retained on mortgage from others and also gave away with utter abandon even his own wealth and property. After he had parted with everything, a certain person came to him and asked for his share. Habib Azmi took out his own jacket and gave it to him. Then, another person came, to whom Habib gave his wife's scarf. Both husband and wife then repaired to the forest, half naked, and started repeating the Lord's name and paying obeisance to Him.

One day Habib's wife had told him that there was no money at home to buy things with, whereupon, Habib said "Very well, I am going out in search of a job." Actually, he went straight to Hasan Basri's Satsang and sat there. When he returned home in the evening his wife asked "What have you brought?" His reply was "My master does not pay daily wages. He will give me ten days' pay at a time." Habib used to go out every day on the plea of doing some work but, in fact, he went on having the benefit of Hasan Basri's Satsang. On the tenth day, he was returning home at snail's pace, feeling ashamed to think what answer he would give to his wife back home this time.

But such was the Lord's dispensation that in the mean time a certain person had brought for Habib and his wife some wheatflour, pulses and such other things as well as three thousand rupees in cash and had said that this was Habib's ten days' pay and if he had worked harder, he would have got more in return. When Habib came to know of this on returning home, he was beside himself with emotion and tears started flowing from his eyes. He said "The Lord gave all this to this sinner just for repeating His name and paying obeisance to Him for ten days. If I remember His name and make obeisance to Him with greater sincerity and devotion, there is nothing that He will not give." From that very moment, he turned his back on the world for good.

Habib's house was located at a road-crossing. One day he left the dress he was wearing at the road-crossing and went to some other place. In the mean time Khwaja Hasan Basri came that way and, on seeing the dress, could recognize whose it was. Hasan Basri kept standing there lest somebody else should take it away. Habib returned after a long time. Finding Khwaja Saheb, he asked "What brought you here?" Khwaja Saheb asked back "In whose care did you leave your dress?" Habib's reply was "In His care who appointed you to look after it."

If somebody is mindful of maintaining decency in words and behaviour but is not particular about maintaining the proper intention or attitude, that also would not be right. There is a great deal of difference between taming the tongue and being sincere at heart.

(65) R Á B A A B A S R Í

The word 'Rábaa' means the fourth. She was called Rabaa because she was the fourth daughter to be born to her parents. The night she was born her father did not have enough linen to cover her with nor had he enough oil for applying to her navel. Her father was asked to bring some oil from his neighbour so that a lamp could be lighted. But he had vowed never to take anything from anybody. When he felt helpless being pressed by his family-members, he went out but soon returned after having just touched the doors of his neighbours with his hands and, on coming back, said that their doors were closed.

When she was a grown up girl, her parents passed away. As a famine was raging, her sisters, too, started living separately. She also left home. Some cheat sold her as a slave. The buyer started extracting hard work from her. But she would not mind this at all, thinking it to be the Lord's Mauj.

Once while going on some business, she fell down by chance and her hands were fractured. She at once prayed in Dhyán "I do not at all care, O Lord, if my hands are fractured and I am rendered helpless. I shall even then abide by Thy Mauj and pleasure." A voice from heaven thereupon said "Do not lament, O Rabaa, for tomorrow you will attain that status which has not fallen to the lot of anybody to this day."

She used to observe fast very often and serve her master faithfully. At night, she would remain lost in remembering the Lord's name and paying obeisance to Him. One night,

her master woke up and found that though the lamp had been extinguished, the room was flooded with light and, at one corner, Rabaa was praying "O Lord ! Had I not been a slave, I would have not failed to utter Thy name and make obeisance to Thee even for a moment, but, what can I do ? I am in the clutches of a human being, and so, I am late in coming to serve Thee." The fellow who had purchased Rabaa felt very much ashamed when he saw and heard this and no sooner the day broke, than he told her "You are free and can go anywhere you please. If you choose to stay here, I shall consider that as my great good luck, and I shall be happy to serve you."

Once Rabaa decided to go on Haj. She put all her things on an ass's back and started on her journey, but the ass died on the way. Those proceeding with the caravan offered to carry her things but to them she said "No, you please go ahead, for, I did not leave home depending on your help and support." And so, all went away and she was left alone in the forest. She prayed in Dhyan "O King of kings ! Does a king behave with an humble and lowly woman the way Thou hast done ? Is it not strange that Thou called me to Thy Abode and then left me all alone in a forest ?" No sooner had she said this than the ass came back to life.

On reaching Mecca, she remained in a forest for a few days and said in prayer "O Lord ! Thou hast captured my heart. I have been born out of dust and this Kábá is made of stone. I long to meet only Thee."

She was going on Haj a second time. As she was proceeding through a forest, she found the Kaba coming towards her to welcome her. She said "I do not need a house (Kaba) but the Lord of the house. What shall I gain by having a look at the building that is Kábá ?"

Hazrat Ibrahim Adham reached Kaba at the end of a journey which took fourteen years. On his way, he was say-

ing "Others have reached Mecca relying upon the strength of their legs but I shall do so depending upon the power of my eyes." So, at every step, he was saying Namaz. Proceeding in this manner, he reached Mecca after a period of fourteen years, but could not see the Kaba. He said to himself that perhaps his eyes were deceiving him. A voice from heaven then said "No, your eyes are not deceiving you. Kaba has gone to welcome a weak and poor woman who is coming in this direction." Hazrat Ibrahim's shame knew no bounds.

Once nine hungry persons came to Rabaa's house as her guests and asked for food. She had then only two pieces of bread with her. At that very moment some Faqir called at her door. She gave him both the breads. On seeing this, her guests were very much astonished. Soon, a woman came and said "Such and such person has sent these breads for you". On counting the breads, Rabaa found that there were eighteen of them. She told the woman who had brought them, "You may be making a mistake. Perhaps your mistress has not sent you to me, but has sent these breads for somebody else". Feeling helpless, that woman left and, going back to her mistress, explained everything to her. The mistress gave two more breads to that woman and sent her to Rabaa again. This time, on counting the breads Rabaa found that they were twenty in all. She accepted the breads and offered them to her guests. After finishing their meal, they asked her to explain the matter. She thereupon said "I had with me only two breads and I could hardly offer them to nine guests. I gave both the breads to the Faqir and prayed to the Lord: It is Thy promise to give ten in exchange for one, and I have full faith in that. I am now giving two breads in Thy name. When that woman brought eighteen breads, I knew that either the messenger had stolen two or the sender had made a mistake or these eighteen breads were not meant for me at all. In any case, the breads should have been twenty in number".

Once as she was saying Namaz, she felt rather weak and went to sleep. In the mean time, a thief entered and

picked up her scarf, but when he came near the door, he could not see it. This happened several times. At last the thief heard a voice saying "Create no trouble for yourself. Even the devil himself cannot come here, how dare you? What does it matter if one friend is sleeping? The other friend is wide awake".

One day she went to a mountain where deers and other wild animals soon gathered round her. Hasan Basri, too, came there in the mean time. The animals ran away as soon as they saw him. Seeing this fun, Hasan Basri was at his wit's end and asked Rabaa what the reason could be. Hazrat Rabaa thereupon wanted to know what he had taken that day. When in reply he said that he had taken the fat of such and such animal, Hazrat Rabaa observed "Well, then, why should not they run away from you?"

Somebody asked her "Do you regard Satan (the devil) as your enemy?" Her reply was "I am fully saturated with love for and friendship with the Merciful Lord, and so how is there any scope for my harbouring any animosity against the Satan (devil)?"

Once she came across a person with bandaged head. On enquiry, she came to know that he had pain in the head. She asked "How old are you?" His reply was "Thirty years". She asked again "During this period, did you ever fall ill or you were in sound health all the time?" He replied "I have always enjoyed sound health". She thereupon said "You have not applied the bandage of your thankfulness for having enjoyed sound health for as long as thirty years but on the other hand, you display the bandage of your complaint for being ill just for a day".

Some persons told her "The merciful Lord hath granted all good qualities, excellence and eminence to men-folk only so far. There has been no woman prophet to this day. Therefore, why do you give yourself the airs of a saint?" In reply, Rabaa said "Whatever you say is quite true, But

men-folk, too, have their own share of self-praise and bragging. Moreover, there has been no woman eunuch to this day. Only men turn eunuchs”.

While she was ill, a certain person went to her to enquire about her illness and said “I pray that you may be cured of your disease”. Hearing this, she broke forth “Don’t you know that this illness has been ordained by the Lord’s command ?” That person said “Yes”. Thereupon she remarked “In that case you should know that it would be wrong to pray against the pleasure of one’s friend”.

That same person again asked “Tell me Rabaa, for which thing do you have the strongest craving ?” She replied “It is strange that you talk like that though you are a sensible fellow. For the last twelve years, a desire to eat fresh dates has been lurking within me and you yourself know how cheap and readily available they are in Basrá. But I have not tasted them even to this day, for I am only a slave and a slave should not entertain any desire. If I ask for them and that is not to the Lord’s liking, it would amount to infidelity on my part. It would be a matter of shame for us if, on the one hand, we want to please the Lord and, on the other, ourselves do not remain pleased with Him and also do not conform to His pleasure”.

A certain old man went to her and found a broken cup lying near her for drinking water. There was also an old mattress for her to lie down upon and a brick which she used as a pillow. That old man burst into tears and said “Rabaa I have some rich friends. If you agree, can I ask for some money from them ?” She thereupon said “You are making a great mistake. Don’t you know that He who gives me as well as them the daily bread is one and the same ?” The old man said “Yes, that is true”. She then asked “Has He ever become unmindful of Faqirs because of their being poor and destitute and remembered wealthy persons because of their riches ?” The old man’s reply was “No”, She thereupon said “When He is aware of every-

body's condition, where is the need for trying to remind Him ? If such are His pleasure and desire, my desire, too is the same”.

(66) H A Z R A T F A Z I L B I N A Y Á Z

In the beginning, he was the leader of a gang of robbers and thieves in his region. Putting on the garb of a Faqir, he would remain lying in a tent pitched in the forest, and his associates, who were all thieves and robbers, would bring and place before him whatever they could grab by stealing and robbing others. He would keep for himself such things as were to his liking and distribute the rest amongst the others.

One day a caravan consisting of some rich travellers passed that way. On seeing the robbers, one person in that caravan who had some cash with him thought that his money would be saved if he parted company with the caravan. So, leaving the caravan, he proceeded to dig a hole somewhere in the forest and hide his money there. But as soon as he left the caravan, he met Fazil Bin Ayáz in the garb of a Faqir and, after having explained everything to him, entrusted all his money to him, and then went back and joined his caravan. The robbers robbed the caravan of everything and disappeared, whereupon he, too, went to Fazil Bin Ayaz's tent to take back the money he had kept in trust with him. Going there, he found that the same person was distributing the booty amongst the robbers. He said to himself that it was a pity that he had entrusted his money to a robber. But the leader of the gang, i. e., Fazil Bin Ayaz, on seeing him from a distance, beckoned him to come to him, saying that he could take away the money from the place where he had kept it. And so, the traveller took his money and joined the caravan again. The robbers asked Fazil why he had returned the traveller's money, whereupon he replied “That fellow reposed his trust in me and I, too, have faith and trust in the Lord”.

One night he was out to rob a caravan. A certain person in that caravan was reciting from the Quran as he was proceeding. Fazil was very much shaken at that sight and he asked himself how long he should go on robbing people. He decided that it was now high time that he should say "Tobá" that is, cry halt. He sincerely repented for his past deeds at that very moment and, running to the caravan, told the travellers that they should have no fear from that day for the robber Fazil had said 'Tobá' or given up robbery.

He begged to all those people who had suffered on his account to forgive him. He told Fazil that he would do so only if Fazil would demolish a certain sand dune. Fazil thereupon spent the whole day taking bagfuls of sand from the dune and throwing it into the river. At night, strong winds blew away all the sand into the river and the entire field became clean. The Jew then said "I shall not forgive you so long as you do not return my money. But you have fulfilled one condition, and so, in order to fulfil this condition also, bring the bag of money lying under my pillow and give it to me. Fazil gave the bag to the Jew as directed. The Jew then again said "Before you leave, admit me into your faith. I had read in the old Testament that dust turns into gold by the touch of one who has sincerely said 'Tobá', that is, has repented for his past evil deeds. I swear by the Lord's name that the bag under my pillow contained just dust. I only wanted to test you. And, indeed, when you gave the bag to me I found that all the dust had turned into gold."

Once he was fondling his son, taking him on his lap. The boy asked him "Father, do you love me?" He replied "yes". The boy again asked "Is the Lord also dear to you?" His reply was "Yes." Thereupon the boy quipped "The same heart cannot accommodate two dear ones." On hearing this, Fazil became very much ashamed. He put the boy aside and applied himself to the Lord's Bhajan and Dhyán.

Some sayings of Fazil Saheb full of valuable instructions :

I am very much obliged to that person who, while passing by me, does not salute me, nor does he enquire about my health if I am sick.

When it is night, I feel happy for then I get the opportunity to be all alone. When the day breaks, I feel sad and morose as I fear people would be soon coming to meet me.

The person who has fear for the Lord becomes dumb. Whom the Lord befriends, He gives plenty of pain and suffering. And He grants worldly treasures and great comfort to one who is averse to Him.

The whole world is afraid of one who is afraid of the Lord. And none is afraid of the person who has no fear for the Lord.

Even if the whole world is sacrificed to me, I shall still shirk it as you shirk a dead body.

It is easy to be lost in the world and worldly pursuits but difficult to dissociate oneself from the world. Indeed, the world is a lunatic asylum and we are so many mad men.

Do not get used to delicious food and soft and elegant dress, for, soon you will be deprived of that pleasure and forced to give up that habit.

The curse of heaven is on that person who outwardly calls somebody his friend but in his heart of hearts is inimical to him.

Truly manly and heroic is he who does not ask for any kind of help from anybody.

If someone asks you why you befriend the Lord, say nothing in reply but keep mum, If you deny being

friendly with Him, that would be an act of infidelity on your part, and if you say you are friendly with Him, that would be a lie, for, your ways of living and actions are unlike those of one friendly with Him.

One's mental faculties are impaired by the two habits of eating too much and sleeping too long.

The saying goes that for full thirty years, no one saw him smiling. But the day he lost his son, he was found with a smile on his face. When people asked him the reason, his reply was "Such was the Lord's will and pleasure. I, too, share His pleasure and conform to His Mauj (will)".

At the time of his death, two of his daughters were alive. He instructed his wife "When you have done with my burial take these two girls to the top of such and such hill, and turning their faces towards the sky, call out "O Lord ! Fazil brought them up as best as he could. Now that Thou hast imprisoned him in the grave, he is returning them, who were under his shelter till now, to Thee." His wife did as directed. Even as she was praying, a rich man came from the other direction who, after making enquiries, gave shelter to the two girls and, with the approval of their mother, married them to his two sons.

(67) I B R Á H Í M A D H A M

He was the emperor of Balakh and was ruling his kingdom with great pomp and splendour. One night, he suddenly woke up and it seemed to him that someone was walking on the roof. He asked "Who are you, and what are you doing there at this hour ?" The reply came "I am your friend and I am searching for my lost camel here." Emperor Ibráhím thereupon asked "Well, how is it possible for a camel to come to the roof of the royal palace ?" That person asked back "Well, how is it possible to meet the Lord while you are dressed in satin and rolling in luxury and comfort ?" On hearing this, a kind of fear and awe grew in Emperor Ibrahim's heart,

The next day when he was sitting on his throne, a sombre looking person entered his court and came straight to him. Nobody had the guts to stop him. Very much surprised, the emperor asked "Who are you, how could you come here?" That person replied "I want to halt at this inn for a while." Emperor Ibrahim said "This is not an inn but a royal palace and the emperor's court." The stranger asked "Who used to stay here prior to you?" The emperor replied "My father." He was again asked "Before your father, who used to stay here?" In reply, emperor Ibrahim said "My grand father, of course." In this way, after enquiring about several past generations, that person further asked "Who is going to stay here after you?" The reply was "My son, to be sure." The stranger thereupon said "Now just think for yourself and tell me if a place like this where so many persons have and will have come and gone is not an inn, what else it can be." Thus saying, he came out of the royal court. A kind of fire was already burning in the emperor's heart, following the night's incident. This encounter with the stranger further intensified the fire. Emperor Ibrahim ran to that person unattended and asked him "Who, really are you?" He replied "Khizir" (a well-known prophet who, it is believed, shows the true path to those who are the victims of illusion and have gone astray). As soon as Ibrahim heard this, his heart-ache was aggravated. Coming to his inner apartment, he lay down, but how could he have rest and peace of mind? He went to the forest on horse-back.

There was a voice from heaven saying "Wake up, Ibrahim, before death awakens you." Thereafter, on seeing a deer Ibrahim Adham wanted to hunt it. But the deer said "You cannot kill me, rather, you yourself will be the victim. Don't you have anything else to do?" Hearing all this, such great fear of the Lord was aroused in his heart that, by mercy, his inner eye was opened. Hence, kicking away all the grandeur of emperorship, he left the city in the garb of a Faqir, and weeping over his evil deeds and sins, proceeded bare footed through forests and mountains,

Wandering in this manner, he came to a forest near Nishápur. There was a large cave in that forest whose very look struck terror in one's heart. He practised penance there for nine years and would come out only on Fridays. He would collect dry wood in the forest and sell it in the city. He would give away in charity half of what he earned, buying bread with the other half, after which, he would come back to the cave and would not come out of it till next Friday.

When his fame spread amongst people, he left that cave. An old Mahatma who visited that cave afterwards had said that even if the cave had been stuffed with musk and amber, it would not give out such sweet aroma as had been created by a devotee's staying there for some time.

He chanced to meet a Darvesh (a wandering mendicant who is a Mohammedan) who was complaining that he had no money. Ibrahim Adham told him "It seems you have acquired the status of a Darvesh free". Thereupon the other person said "Does one have to purchase that status?" Ibrahim Adham replied "Yes, I purchased it in exchange for ruling over the kingdom of Balakh and think I got it cheap".

A certain person brought one thousand rupees to Ibrahim Adham and requested him to accept the money. Ibrahim Adham said "I take nothing from beggars". That person submitted "I am not a beggar, but a wealthy person". Ibrahim asked him "Don't you hanker after more money?" That person replied "Yes, I do". Ibrahim Adham broke forth "Pick up your money and get away from here, for you are the most beggarly of beggars."

Ibrahim Adham went on Haj several times but he never drank the water of the well 'Zam Zam' (a well of Kaba considered to be holy by Mohammedans) for the bucket for drawing the water from the well used to be procured with money donated by the king.

Once a certain person who was about to bid him fare-

well after having stayed with him for a pretty long time, submitted to him "Please tell me of any blemish or evil tendency you may have noticed in me". Ibrahim Adham replied "I have always looked upon you as a friend, and so, ask someone else about your blemishes."

Once the Caliph asked him "What is your vocation?" His answer was "I have entrusted the world to seekers after the world, and the other world to those who are after it. The only vocation that I have accepted in this world is to remember the Lord's name and make obeisance to Him and, when I am gone from here, the only thing that I would like to do is to have the Lord's Darshan". When somebody else asked him the same question, his reply was "Are you not aware that the Lord's workers do not have to adopt any vocation?"

Once a certain barber was shaving him when one of his disciples came there. He told the disciple that if he had anything with him, he should give it to the barber. The disciple gave him a bag. A beggar came in the mean time and when he asked for something, the barber handed over the same bag to him. Ibrahim Adham told the barber "That bag is full of coins". The barber thereupon broke forth "O, you miser ! As far as I know, aristocracy and affluence do not depend on how much wealth one possesses but on the richness of one's heart". Ibrahim again said "This bag is full of silver and gold coins". The barber replied "I know the worth of the man whom I give". Ibrahim Adham has said that on hearing the barber he felt very much ashamed.

People asked him "You kicked away your throne and turned a Darvesh. By so doing, did you ever experience some true happiness?" His reply was "Once I was in a ferry-boat. My clothes were dirty and I had long hair. Seeing my wretched condition the other passengers in the boat were making fun of me. One of the jokers was constantly hitting and pinching me and pulling my hair. I was quite happy with this kind of insult. In the mean time, high

waves surged forth in the river and it was feared that the boat might sink. The boat-men said that one person in the boat had to be thrown into the river and then only would the waves subside. So, the other passengers caught hold of me by the ear and wanted to throw me overboard. But as soon as they touched my ear, the waves calmed down and the boat was saved. I felt extremely happy when they caught hold of me by the ear”.

Once I went to the mosque, intending to sleep there. But people at that place would not allow me to do so and, after giving me a good thrashing, they took me out of the mosque dragging and hurtling me down the staircase. As I was rolling down one step after another and was receiving a series of severe knocks on the head, one special secret after another concerning the Lord was unfolded to me each time I received a knock. And I said to myself what a pity it was that the steps were not larger in number so that more of the Lord's secrets could have been revealed to me.

Ibrahim Adham has said : “Once I bought a slave. I asked him “What is your name ?” His reply was “By whatever name you call me”. I again asked “What would you eat ?” He replied “Whatever you give me”. I next asked “What will you put on ?” His answer was “Anything that you give me”. At the end, I asked “What is your heart's desire ?” He replied “How can a slave have any desire and what desire can he have ?” Ibrahim Adham has said “On hearing him, I said to myself ‘In your whole life, you never had the good fortune of worshipping the Lord like this. You should learn from this slave how to worship Him’. Thereafter, I wept and wept and then fell asleep”.

Once somebody prayed to him that he might be pleased to give him some instructions which he would cherish and also try to put into practice. Ibrahim Adham thereupon told him “If you agree, I can tell you of six things. If you can practise them, then, even if you do anything wrong, no harm will be done to you”.

The first thing is that if you happen to disobey the Lord and commit some sin, you should refrain from taking your daily bread which He has given you. That person thereupon asked "Then, from where should I obtain my food?" Ibrahim Adham's reply was "Well, it is the height of impropriety to eat one's bread and, at the same time, disobey Him". Ibrahim Adham continued "The second thing is that when there is a chance of your committing some sin and disobeying the Lord, leave His jurisdiction and kingdom and then only do any sinful deed." That person thereupon said "The entire creation is His, so, where can one go?" At this, Ibrahim Adham replied "It is improper to disobey Him even while staying in His Kingdom". He then went on "The third point is that the sin is to be committed if at all, only at such a place that the Lord cannot notice it". That person said "That is not possible, for, He sees the innermost recesses of everybody's heart". Ibrahim Adham said "If you have to stay in His kingdom and eat food given by Him, it would be improper to do anything wrong before His eyes". "The fourth point is", continued Ibrahim Adham, "that if the agent of death comes to you to take away your life, you should tell him, 'Tarry a little and let me say Tobá'. That person thereupon submitted "That, too, is not possible, for, he will not listen to me". Ibrahim Adham's reply was "If that is the case, you should say Tobá before the agent of death visits you". Ibrahim continued "The fifth point is that if the agent Nakir and Munkir visit you in the grave and ask you whose slave you are and whom you worship, you should drive them away". That person said "I cannot do even that", whereupon Ibrahim Adham said "In that case be ready, now, to answer their questions. "The sixth point is", continued Ibrahim, "That at the time when all sinners are cast into hell after accounts of their past deeds have been taken you should refuse to accompany them". That person said "That, too, is not possible". Thereupon Ibrahim said "Well, then, refrain from doing evil and sinful deeds".

Some men asked him "We pray to the Lord, but He

does not listen to our prayers. What can be the reason ?” He replied “You accept the Lord’s existence but you do not obey His commands. You do recognise Sádhs and Mahatmas sent by Him, but you do not become their true followers. You read their writings, but do not mould your conduct accordingly. You know that the hell is meant for sinners and doers of evil deeds, and yet, you are not afraid of committing sin. You know that Satan is your enemy, but do not run away from him, rather, become friendly with him. You are well aware that death is inevitable but you do not get yourself prepared for the journey. You find your friends and relations dying, but do not take warning from their fate, and do not give up your evil tendencies. You only find faults with others. Now tell me how can the prayers of such a person be accepted by the Lord ? He would, of course, listen to his prayer but would not accept or grant it”.

Once Ibrahim Adham had gone to a public bath for a wash. But seeing his old and tattered clothes people would not let him in. He, thereupon, said “If one is not allowed to enter even the devil’s den empty handed, how can one be admitted into the Lord’s abode unless one remembers Him all the time and makes obeisance to Him ?”

It is said that during his last days, Ibrahim Adham so disappeared that no one even saw him since.

(68) B A S H A R H Á F Í

He spent the greater part of his life in Baghdád. Once when he was going somewhere in a drunken state, he noticed a piece of paper lying on the road. Picking it up, he found that the Lord’s name had been written on it. He cleaned the paper, applied some scent to it and kept it at an elevated place so that it might not be subjected to disrespect. The same night a certain old man received the following command in a dream : “Go to Bashar Háfi and tell him that since he showed due respect to my name and, applying scent to it, kept it at an elevated place, I also shall grant him high status and abode in a higher region”. That old man was at his

wit's end on hearing this and thought that Bashar Hafi was, after all, a sinner, and so, his dream was sure to be false. Thus thinking, he again went to sleep but saw the same dream once more. So, as soon as the day broke, he went to Bashar Hafi's place. There, he gathered that perhaps he had gone to the wineshop. Accordingly, he went to the wine-shop where he was told that a fellow called Bashar Hafi was lying there drunk and senseless. The old man asked the men in the wine-shop that they should go and tell Bashar Hafi that some person had come with a message for him. With great difficulty they could explain the matter to him, whereupon he said "Go and ask him whose message he has brought". The old man, on meeting him, said, "I am carrying the Lord's message". As soon as Bashar Hafi heard this, he burst into tears and wondered what kind of message it was going to be and what kind of wrath or mercy of the Lord was about to fall to his lot. Indeed, due to fear, his state of intoxication completely vanished and, after driving away all others who were nearby, he listened to the Lord's message and then said 'Tobá'. To his pals he said "You will never find me drinking again".

After saying Tobá, he gave up wearing shoes. This is why he came to be called 'Háfi' meaning, barefooted. When people asked him why he did not put on shoes, he replied "At the time I said Tobá I had no shoes on, and I feel ashamed to put them on now. Another thing is this that the Lord has declared 'O men ! I have made the earth as the floor for you to tread upon'. So, it will be showing disrespect to the Emperor, the Lord, by walking on the floor made by Him with shoes on".

Once a certain person submitted to him "I have two thousand rupees with me which I earned by rightful means. With that money, I intend to go on Haj". Bashar Hafi curtly said "You seem to be going on a pleasure trip. If you are really going with a view to pleasing the merciful Lord, you should give away this money to some Darvesh or

beggar or any needy fellow or an orphan, for, the happiness which such a person will thereby feel will do you more good than proceeding on Haj". That person thereupon said "But I am more keen on going on Haj". At this, Bashar Hafi broke forth "Your money has not been earned by right-ful means. You will not be at peace till you are able to spend it at a place abounding in sin".

In the city of Baghdad, out of respect for him, even animals would not eject dungs on the road for he used to go about bare-footed. After he had passed away, one animal let its dung drop on the road and it struck its master that probably Bashar Hafi was no more. On enquiry, he found that his surmise was true.

(69) B Á Y Z E E D B U S T Á M Í

Once he did not experience bliss on either remembering the Lord's name or making obeisance to Him or engaging in other spiritual practices. He thereupon asked his servant "What is there in this room?" Having taken a look round, the latter replied "There is a bunch of grapes, here".

Hearing this, he said "Give it away to somebody, for my house is not a shop". When that was done, he started experiencing bliss in Abhyás (spiritual practices) again.

A certain person came to test him. He ordered him to go to one particular disciple of his. On going to him, that person found him absorbed in spiritual practices and, meanwhile, wolves were guarding his flock of sheep. Seeing this, he was taken aback. After the disciple had finished his spiritual practices, he asked that person what he wanted, whereupon he replied "Hot bread and some grapes". The disciple took a stick and after breaking it in two, dug both pieces in the ground. Soon grapes appeared on them but that half of the stick which was on the disciple's side bore white grapes while black grapes appeared on the other half which was nearer that person. Seeing this, the latter asked what the reason could be, whereupon the disciple replied

"You asked for grapes motivated by a desire to test me, whereas I was looking for them relying upon faith and trust. The colour of everything depends on its internal condition. As one's inclination is, so will be the result which one will achieve".

Some sayings of Bayzeed Bustami

The Lord grants three things to the person whom He chooses to befriend, viz., ocean-like large-heartedness, earth-like patience or sense of hospitality and sun-like mercy and spirit of benevolence.

Association with good people is better than doing good things. Similarly, association with bad people is worse than doing evil deeds.

Hunger is such a cloud that nothing but showers of mercy and compassion can descend from it.

If somebody obliges you by doing a good turn to you, thank the Lord first and then that person, for it was the Lord who made him kind towards you.

When somebody asked how to meet the Lord the answer given was "By becoming blind, deaf and dumb".

Says Bayzeed "I used to think that I loved the Lord, but when I pondered deeply, I realized that He had been loving me already".

(70) A B D U L L Á B I N M U B Á R A K

He was so enamoured of a certain woman that he had no peace at heart. One night in winter, he remained standing all the time reclining against a wall of her room. When Namáz was being said in the mosque in the morning, he first thought that it was being said for the night. But he soon realized his mistake. He felt very much ashamed that he had spent the whole night for the sake of a mere mortal, while had he stood all night worshipping the Lord, there

was no knowing how much he would have been benefitted. Thus thinking, he instantly said 'Tobá'. Indeed, after this incident, he reached such a stage that one day his mother found him lying under a tree while a snake with a twig of the Nargis tree in its mouth was driving away flies so that they could not pester him.

Once he dreamt of two angels descending from the sky. One of them asked the other "How many people have come on Haj this year?" "Six Lakhs" replied the second angel. The first angel again asked "How many peoples' Haj has been accepted?" The reply was, "Not even one's." Such and such cobbler lives in Damascus. Though he did not actually come on Haj, his Haj has been accepted". Abdullá Bin Mubárák has said "On hearing this, I became very much upset and thought that the troubles patiently borne by so many people in making the journey and the money spent by them had all gone in vain. I thereafter went to Damascus and met that cobbler. He told me "I had collected thirty thousand rupees for going on Haj and was quite ready to proceed, but one day my wife told me that she was getting the smell of delicious food being prepared in the house of a neighbour and I should go and bring some of it so that she could also taste that delicacy. So I went to that neighbour's house and asked for some of the food but he said that the food would not be right and proper for me as his wife and children had been starving for the last seven days and, on that day, only a little food had been prepared. On hearing that, I was so much moved that back home, I took all those thirty thousand rupees and gave them to that neighbour'. Hearing this account from the cobbler, Abdullá Bin Mubarak said to himself that what one of the angels was saying was really true.

Once, during the winter, while passing through the market, he came across a slave who had just one shirt on and was shivering in cold. Abdulla asked him "Why don't you tell your master to give you some warm dress so that you can withstand the cold?" The slave replied "When the

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 master is seeing for himself, where is the necessity of my reminding him ?”

Some people asked him “What would you prescribe for the purification of the mind ?” His answer was “To keep at a distance from others”.

Abdulla Bin Mubarak gave away all his wealth and property to Faqirs during his life-time. One day a guest came to him. Abdulla spent whatever little he still had with him on entertaining the guest, submitting to him that whatever was being offered to him was a gift from the Lord. His wife started quarrelling with him, whereupon he said that a cantankerous woman should not be kept in the house. He then broke off all relations with her. The same day, the daughter of some chieftain came to his Satsang. She very much liked his discourses and, back home, she told her father to marry her to Abdulla. Accordingly, that chieftain married his daughter to Abdulla. That very night he heard in a dream “This is in return of your breaking off relations with your wife for my sake, so that you may realize that once anybody becomes my own, no harm will be done to him.”

When his last days drew near, he gave away all his wealth and belongings to Darveshes. One of his disciples said to him “You have three daughters and you are about to depart from this world. Would you not leave something for them ?” His reply was “The Lord will be there to look after them.”

### (71) S A F I Á N S Ú R Í

One day when he entered the mosque, he put his left foot in first by mistake. At that very moment, he heard a voice from heaven saying “O, you Súr (an ox) ! Do not behave like a Súr !” On hearing this, he became senseless. When he regained his senses, he caught hold of his beard, and giving a slap on his own cheek, said “O you unmannerly one ! Why don't you step inside the mosque respectfully ?

For this lapse on your part, your name has been removed from the list of the names of human beings and has been included in that of animals." It is because of the above incident that he came to be known as Súrí (from the word 'Súr')

Once the then Caliph was saying Namaz. Safián Súrí was standing behind him. The Caliph was again and again trying to keep his beard in shape. Safian Suri thereupon broke forth "This kind of Namaz will not be accepted. On the day of resurrection, it will be flung back on your face." The Caliph curtly said "Speak more softly." Safian Suri shot back "I am not at all afraid of telling the truth". The Caliph became very angry with him and gave the order that he was to be pierced by the impaling stake, whereupon he said "I do not care for my life". Such was the Mauj that the Caliph and all his close associates were crushed under the roof of a house which collapsed on them.

Safian Suri has said that if a person gives away ill-gotten money in charity, he is really trying to wash dirty clothes with blood.

He used to say "Buy for me death if available". When the time for his departure from this world came, he said "I was at one time looking for death but now realize that dying is extremely difficult."

## (72) SHAFÍQ BALKHÍ

Once he went to Turkey in connection with his business and had a chance to visit a place where idols had been preserved for worship. There, a certain idolater was engaged in the worship of the idols. Shafiq Balkhi told him "Your Creator is a wide-awake and all powerful Being and you should worship Him. You should give up worshipping idols, for that will be of no use to you." Hearing this, the idol-worshipper said "If your God is as you just now described, can He not give you your daily bread in your own city? Why, then, did you leave Balakh and come here," These

words gave a hard blow to Shafiq's heart and he returned to Balakh that very moment.

Once famine broke out in Balakh and things came to such a pass that human beings started devouring each other. Finding a slave quite happy and contented, Shafiq Balkhi asked him "How is this an occasion to be happy?" The slave replied "Why should I worry at all? There are heaps of bagfuls of grain in my master's house". Hearing this Shafiq Balakhi received another rude shock and he exclaimed "O Lord! If a slave can be so proud of an insignificant master, any amount of exaltedness on the part of a person over Thy gifts would not be too much and unseemly. He thereafter severed all connections with the world and firmly adopted and adhered to patience and contentment. He often used to say that he was the disciple of a slave.

Once an old man came to him and said "I have committed many sins and I now want to say 'Tobá'. He remarked "You have come too late". At this, the old man said "I have come early, for the man who comes to say Tobá before death overtakes him should be considered to have come in time". Shafiq Balakhi observed "Well said, and congratulations for coming."

### (73) D Á Ú D T Á Í

The house in which he used to live was very big. When any particular room became unfit for use, he would shift to some other room. When people asked him why he did not arrange for repairs, his reply was that he had promised to God that he would not undertake any repairs of things worldly. In short, the entire house tumbled down in course of time, and only the threshold was left which, too, was razed to the ground at the time of his death. Once when a certain person had gone to him and said that the roof of his house had been damaged and it would soon fall down, he told him that he had not seen the roof for the last twenty years,

**(74) H Á R A S M A H Á S B Í**

He has said "Never swear, no matter whether what you are saying is true. As far as possible, never promise but, once you have promised, do not fail to keep it. Do not seek either reward or revenge. Do not give evidence of any kind, true or false".

**(75) A H M E D H A S R A B**

One night he went to a place of worship. It was raining heavily. He was fearing lest water might enter the room and flood it. At that very moment there was a voice from heaven which said "Ahmed, go home, for your attention is directed towards the room and not worship". Ahmed Hasrab instantly said Tobá to the folly he was given to.

A certain fire-worshipper happened to be one of his neighbours. There was a theft at the neighbour's house. Ahmed Hasrab went there to express sympathy for him. The neighbour said "Though I am a victim of theft, I am thankful for three things : Firstly, my things have been stolen by others but I have not stolen anything ; secondly, only one-half of my belongings has been stolen ; thirdly, my worldly belongings only have been stolen, but my spiritual attainment is intact". Ahmed Hasrab liked these words.

The saying goes that never in his life he had slept at night. When people wanted to know the reason he said "Tell me how can a person sleep when he finds before him heaven on one side and hell on the other, and he does not know whether he will be sent to heaven or cast into hell."

**(76) H Á T A M A S A M**

Asam, meaning deaf, was only his surname and he was not really deaf. Once it so happened that a certain woman came to him seeking answer to a particular question but, by chance, she passed wind with a loud note, as a result of which she felt very much ashamed. Observing her discom-

future, he told her "Speak loudly as I could not hear you, being hard of hearing". Hearing this, her feeling of shame was gone and, in fact, lest she should ever feel ashamed, Hátam Asam, posed as a deaf person as long as she lived.

Once when he was passing through the market, a certain shop-keeper caught hold of one of his disciples and said "You have picked up such and such thing from my shop and eaten it. You must pay for it". Hátam Asam thereupon told the shop-keeper "Brother ! Forgive him and let him go". The shop-keeper shot back "No, I will never let him go". At this, Hátam Asam took the scarf from his shoulder and hit it against the ground. Instantly, the scarf turned into heaps of one-rupee coins. Hatam Asam told the shop-keeper "Take your dues but, mind you, you must not take more. If you do that, your hands will dry up". So, the shop-keeper first took what was his due but, overcome by greed, he again stretched out his hand for more money, whereupon his hands withered in no time.

Once Hatam Asam told his wife "I shall be away from home for four months. How much do you need to meet your expenses ?" His wife replied "As much as I would till I die". He thereupon said "Your life does not depend on me". His wife retorted "In that case, I also do not depend upon you for my daily bread". An old woman came to his wife during his absence from home and asked her "How much did Hatam leave with you for your daily bread ?" His wife replied "He used to take his own daily bread, all right, and is now gone. He was not the giver of my daily bread. That giver is here".

Hatam Asam has said "There are five kinds of mind, viz., dead, sick, ignorant, encased, and alert. The mind of infidels and atheists is dead ; of sinners, sick ; of gluttons, ignorant ; of those antagonistic towards God and religion, encased in covers ; and of those who remember the Lord and make obeisance to him, alert,

## (77) S A R R Í Š A K T Í

In the beginning, he had a shop in Baghdád. He had taken the vow not to make profits of more than a certain per cent. Once the market-rate of almonds rose high. He had a large stock of this commodity. A certain broker approached him and advised him to sell his almonds at a high profit. He, however, said "No, I have vowed to make profit only up to such and such per cent".

Once the market-place of Baghdad caught fire. All shops were burnt down save that of Sarri Sakti, which was saved by Lord's dispensation. At this, he gave away all he had in the service of the Lord.

He has said that the most powerful man is he who has conquered anger.

## (78) Y Á H Y Á M Á Z R Á Z Í

Once somebody remarked that so long as death is there, this world is not worth even a broken cowrie.\* Thereupon Yáhyá Mázzrázî said that if death were not there, this world would not have been worth even one worn out cowrie, for, it is death alone which brings two friends together.

He has said "Three persons are clever,—one, who gives up the world and would have nothing to do with it ; another, who, before entering the grave, lays its foundation ; and a third one, who pleases the Lord before he goes to Him.

## (79) J U N A I D B A G H D Á D Í

He was born in the city of Baghdád in the ninth century A. D. His father, whose name was Mohammed, was an ordinary person who earned his living by selling sometimes looking glasses and, at other times, hide and skin,

\* A small shell used as a coin of the smallest denomination. A bit of money of the smallest value.

There was no person in his family or among his ancestors who was eminent enough to deserve mention. Of course, in his maternal grand-parent's family, there was his maternal uncle, Hazrat Sarri Sakti, who, as a wise man, had no equal.

Hazrat Sarri Sakti could recognize his nephew even when he was just a boy and so he used to explain to the young Súfí, worldly and spiritual matters in the form of witty and amusing stories and anecdotes which used to have a profound impression on the mind of his simple and unsophisticated nephew.

When Junaid was only seven years old, Sarri Sakti took Junaid with him as a companion during one of his travels. Hundreds of Faqirs were accompanying him. On the way, he used to discuss the principles and tenets of Sufi philosophy. Young Junaid used to listen to him very attentively. One day discussions were going on on the subject of thankfulness. When all the wise persons in the group had had their say on the above topic, Sarri Sakti turned towards Junaid and said "Tell me now, my boy, what you understand by thankfulness". The promising lad's answer was "Not to disobey the Lord after having received His gifts, is what constitutes thankfulness". All were taken aback on hearing his reply. One day the discussion came to be centred on love and affection for the Lord. All had realized Junaid's worth by this time and they requested that he, too, should say something on the subject. As soon as he listened to the request of the wise men, he hung his head low, and with tears rolling down his eyes, said "When love is engendered in a devotee, his condition becomes such that if he says anything at all, it is all about the Lord ; if any word comes out of his mouth, it is the Lord's name ; if he walks along, he does so at the Lord's command ; and if he halts at any place, he does that also by His order. In a sense, he from now on, acts under the Lord's impulse, lives for Him and is always with Him". Hearing this, all started shedding tears and, in one voice, said that there could be no

better explanation of love than this. A few days after, he was once again asked about thankfulness to the Lord. He said "Thankfulness consists in deriving benefit from the Lord's gifts in such a manner that one does not exploit them in committing any sin".

Hazrat Sarri Sakti knew very well that his nephew would one day flower into a perfect saint (Faqir). That is why he had started dyeing Junaid in his own colour from his very childhood. But while he cherished the desire to find Junaid turning into a perfect Faqir in due course, he also wanted Junaid to become an erudite scholar as far as worldly or intellectual knowledge was concerned. Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar has said "A Faqir without any intellectual knowledge is the devil's brother". Shekh Sádi, too, has said,

Without intellectual knowledge, it is impossible to recognize God.

Due to association with his maternal uncle and because of his constantly attending upon the latter, Hazrat Junaid's spiritual as well as intellectual training went on unabated all the time.

When Junaid finished his studies and had acquired requisite intellectual knowledge at the age of twenty, Sarri Sakti made him his disciple and the latter had to undertake hard penance, painstaking fasts and the practice of repetition of *Nám*. For several years, sitting under a stair-case, he kept himself occupied with the repetition of the Lord's name and, over a long period, performed *Abhyas* taking his seat in his own room and keeping awake night after night.

As a result of going through this kind of grinding and hardship, his spiritual status reached such a high level that even Hazrat Sarri Sakti himself had to seek his opinion at times. Once finding his maternal uncle somewhat perturbed, Junaid respectfully enquired of him "Are you all right?" His maternal uncle replied "A certain young man came today and was

asking what saying Tobá really meant. I told him that saying Toba consists in not forgetting the sins one has committed. But he said 'No, you are wrong. Saying Toba really consists in getting one's sins completely effaced or, in other words, in engendering such deep love for the holy feet of the Lord that the sins are totally annihilated.' Junaid thereupon asked "What, then, is worrying you?" His maternal uncle replied "I cannot decide which of the two explanations is correct". Junaid submitted "In my opinion, the young man was right, for, to be conscious of one's impurities at the time one is being cleansed of them is also a kind of impurity". As soon as he heard this, Hazrat Sarri Sakti became fully convinced and he exclaimed "You are right".

People used to come to Junaid from far off places to listen to his discourses and they would return satisfied. A band of his opponents also grew up. They misled others and even complained to the Caliph against Junaid. But nothing objectionable could be found which would justify the institution of an enquiry. Ultimately, with a view to vitiating his spiritual status, a certain beautiful woman was engaged. She went to Hazrat Junaid and started pleading "Please keep me with you and teach me how to take Allah's name." Hazrat Junaid went on listening to her with head hanging low. After she had finished talking, he raised his head and cast his glance on her whereupon she became unconscious and soon expired.

When the Caliph came to know of this, he became very agitated and, instantly going to Junaid, said "You have done something outrageous. You killed a woman and were not at all sorry about it." In his reply, Junaid said "You should not be so unkind to the devotees reposing all their trust in the Lord. You wanted to spoil my very spiritual attainment acquired through hard labour and penances over a period of forty years. However, the life and death of that woman were in the Lord's hands and the matter was entirely beyond my control."

All people used to be drawn towards Junaid. It was impossible for Darveshes and Faqirs not to come to him for his Darshan while they were passing through the vicinity of Baghdad. Abu Abdullā Hanīf himself has said "Once I was going on Haj. I had to pass through Baghdad on my way. I was very proud of being a Sufi. I stayed in Baghdad for a long time but never, during that period, paid a visit to Hazrat Junaid. It was my practice those days to fetch water from outside the city. One day when I went out for that purpose, I found a deer standing near the well and drinking water. I had a bucket in my hand and I proceeded towards the well. Seeing me, the deer ran away. I found the water at a very low level. Disappointed, I was about to leave that place. I broke forth, "O Lord ! Am I not even the equal of the deer ?" Then a voice from heaven came saying "I tested you, but you failed. Now go and drink water." When I looked at the well now. I found it was full to the brim. I filled my bucket and started quenching my thirst. A voice from heaven again came "The deer came without any bucket but you brought one with you." Anyhow, the matter rested there and I went on Haj. Returning from there, I again came to Baghdad and visited the Jámá Masjid (mosque), where I found Hazrat Junaid sitting. He looked at me and said "If you had a little patience and waited, you would have found a spring gushing from under your feet. It is a pity that you did not wait a little."

One day a certain woman came to Hazrat Junaid and submitted "O Hazrat ! My son is missing. Bless me so that I may get him back." Hazrat Junaid replied "Go and have patience." She left but came back after a little while and said "O Hazrat ! Bless me so that I may get my son back." Thereupon Junaid again gave the same reply "Go and wait patiently." In this way, she came back several times and then left after getting the same reply each time. But finally, when she felt utterly exhausted, she said "No longer do I have the strength to wait. Please do bless me so that I can get my son back." At this, Junaid said "If that is so, you can

go. Your son has come back already." The woman left, and returned after a short while and started thanking Hazrat Junaid. Seeing this, all were very much astonished and asked him "How did you come to know that her son had come back?" He replied "When the woman had no longer the strength to have patience, what could be the reason for the Lord's not listening to her prayer and acquiescing with the blessing?"

In Mecca, a certain barber was shaving somebody when Hazrat Junaid came there and told the barber "For Lord's sake, cut my hair." The barber thereupon stopped shaving that person saying "Since this is an assignment from the Lord, I must attend to it first." At this Hazrat Junaid resolved that whatever he got first, he would give it to the barber. It so happened that after some time, a bagful of gold coins came to Hazrat Junaid from Basará, which he took to the barber. The latter remarked "You silly fellow! Are you not ashamed of giving me something in exchange for what I did in the Lord's name?"

Hazrat Junaid used to love one of his disciples more than the others. The latter once complained to him. He said "He is sharper than any one of you." To test them all he gave to each one of his disciples a knife and an animal and said "Go and kill the animal at a place where no one sees you." All the other disciples came back after having killed the animal given to each, but that particular disciple brought back his animal alive. When Hazrat Junaid asked him why he had not killed the animal, he replied "Wherever I went, the Lord, who observes everything, was present and was seeing everything." Hearing this, Hazrat Junaid just looked at his other disciples.

## (80) ABDULLÁ HANÍF

He was called Haníf as he used to fast every day and would take only seven grapes. One day he asked his disciple to bring the grapes. The disciple brought eight grapes. That

day Hanif experienced no bliss in Bhajan. He could understand that he had taken eight grapes. When he asked his disciple about the matter, he submitted "You have become very weak and that is why I brought eight grapes." Hanif observed, "You are not my friend but my enemy. Had you been a friend, you would have brought six grapes"

Amongst his disciples, two had the same name. He used to call one of them Ahmed Kah and the other Ahmed Mah. He was particularly fond of Ahmed Kah who was the younger of the two, whereupon his other disciples used to complain to him. One day he called Ahmed Mah and told him "Take the camel standing at the door to the roof." Ahmed Mah said "Hazrat ! That is not possible." At this, Abdulla Hanif said "All right, take your seat." He then told the same thing to Ahmed Kah, who was instantly ready to carry out his order. He tried his best but could not make the camel move at all. Hazrat Abdulla asked him to sit down, and then turning towards his other disciples said "Now you see why I am particularly fond of Ahmed Kah. Ahmed Mah started arguing what was possible and what was not possible. Ahmed Kah, on the other hand, wasted no time bothering over these questions but instantly got ready to carry out my order. From this alone, you can judge their internal condition. In the Lord's Darbár (court), what deserves appreciation and praise is the carrying out of His orders and not fussing and arguing.

Once two Sadhus came for his Darshan but on reaching his place, they learnt that he had gone to the emperor. At this, the Sadhus got a bad impression and wondered why, being a Faqir, he should be going to the emperor. In short, they soon left that place. On the way they took their seats in a tailor's shop wanting to get some torn cloth mended. By chance, the tailor's pair of scissors was missing. He caught hold of the two Sadhus and took them to the police chief who produced them before the emperor on the charge of theft. The emperor gave the order that the Sadhus' hands should be severed from their bodies. Hazrat Abdulla was

also with the emperor at that time. He said to the emperor "Let them go, they are innocent." He then told those Sadhus "I hope you now understand that it is for people like you that I have to come even to the emperor".

### (81) S H E K H S H I B L Í

His name was Abu Bakar Dalaf Bin Majdar Shiblí. His forefathers came from a village called Shiblá and so the members of his family used to be called Shiblí. His father was an Arzbegi\* in the caliph's court and his duty was to forward the petitions of people to the emperor. Hazrat Shibli was born in 861 A. D. After he had finished his studies, he was appointed as the magistrate of Niháband.

When he had occupied this position for four years, the caliph started making preparations for holding some function. Darbar was held with great pomp and splendour to which governors, magistrates, judges and other high-ranking officials from all parts of the state were invited. They offered presents to the caliph who rewarded them with very costly robes of honour. An unfortunate official could not help sneezing in the open Darbar. Since he had no handkerchief with him, he cleaned his nose with the robe presented by the caliph, who noticed this and became very angry. The robe was taken back from that official that very moment and he was removed from his post. All the courtiers trembled with fear on seeing the caliph's wrath. But this event had a special effect on Shibli. He thought within himself that if one had to put up with such insult because of spoiling the robe given by a worldly ruler, how severe would be the punishment which one would have to undergo for defiling the robe graciously granted by the Ruler of rulers who is the Lord and the creator of them all. Thus thinking, he tendered his resignation forthwith and embarked on the search for a Guru.

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\* An officer who presents and reads letters and representations to a great personage or a king.

As soon as he came to the presence of Hazrat Junaid Baghdádí, he submitted to the latter "I hear that what I am searching for is available with you. Can that be obtained free or one has to pay a price for it?" Hazrat Junaid replied "That commodity is very costly. You do not have enough capital with you and you cannot buy it. If I give it free, you will not appreciate its worth. Of course, if you continue to search for it with patience, you may possibly get it".

Hazrat Junaid made his would-be disciple engage in hard penance and painstaking fasts for one year and, in the second year, ordered him to beg from door to door, adding that he would not put to his own use whatever he might get by begging. In the third year, Hazrat Junaid told him "You ruled over Niháband and must have oppressed people there. So long as you do not get the wrong done by you pardoned by them, you cannot be admitted to the Darbar". Shiblí instantly stood up and, going to Nihaband, prayed to its people with tears in his eyes, "The other day I was your governor. If I have committed excesses of any kind against you, then do please forgive me". Going to each and every person in the city, he begged of all of them to forgive him. Only one person was left out who had been away from home on some business. He had kept one rupee in trust with Shiblí who now searched for him a lot but could not get his whereabouts. Shiblí gave away many rupees in charity in exchange for this one rupee. Even then, he had no peace at heart and felt sorry about it till the end. Only a few days before his departure from this world, he told one of his friends that he had to pay one rupee to such and such person and though, in exchange of that one rupee he had given away many rupees in charity, he still does not feel relieved of the burden of that single rupee.

After Hazrat Junaid had made Shiblí practise all this rigid continence, he kept the latter (Shiblí) near him and entrusted to him the Sewa of Faqirs. After one year, Hazrat

Junaid asked Shibli "What is the condition of your mind now?" Shibli's reply was "I regard myself inferior to all". Hazrat Junaid thereupon said "You are in the correct frame of mind now".

Hazrat Shibli used to be full of great zeal and enthusiasm. All the time, he would be in a state of intoxication. Love for the Lord would often make him restless. In spite of all this, Hazrat Junaid would allow no such thing to happen as would engender pride in Shibli's heart and thus cause harm to him.

One day many people had gathered. They started praising Shibli. Hazrat Junaid said "You are wrong. This fellow is still far from the Lord." Thereafter, he turned Shibli out of his congregation. After he had been turned out in this insulting manner, Hazrat Junaid told those people "Your praise was such a sharp sword that it would have instantly killed Shibli. His mind would have become coarse had I not saved him".

One day while Shibli was passing through the road, a hawker selling cups of Sharbat (syrup) cried out "Only one cup is now left". As soon as Shibli heard this, he became very much agitated and gave out a loud cry. The words "Only one remains, only one remains" came out of his mouth. And, at the end, he said "And save One, none else will remain".

Once Shibli fell ill. People took him to the Hakím (physician) who told him "Practise moderation and continence". Shibli said "Regarding what? I shall certainly get what Providence has dispensed for me. What has not fallen to my lot I cannot get, even if I want to".

Another time it so happened that when he fell ill, this information reached the caliph's minister who had faith in Shibli. With the permission of the caliph, he appointed the royal physician, who was a Christian, for treating Shibli. His treatment left nothing lacking and Shibli soon came

round. The royal physician submitted to Shibli "If I had to bite off my own flesh for curing you, I would not have hesitated to do so". Shibli thereupon said "My treatment is different." The Christian physician asked "What is that?" Shibli replied "It is this that you should dash your Cross to the ground and repose sincere trust in the true Lord". The physician had already some idea of Shibli's spiritual status. He now became Shibli's disciple. When this information reached the caliph, he said "I had sent a physician to a patient, and little did I know then that I was sending a patient to a physician".

Once when Shibli fell ill, several persons came to see him. Shibli asked them "Who are you and why have you come?" Those persons submitted "We are your friends and have come here to enquire about your health". At this, Shibli started pelting them with stones and said "If you are my friends, you should maintain calm and patience at my suffering, but what is this that you have come running to me, instead?" Pelted with stones, these persons took to their heels in a state of consternation.

In his whole life, Shibli never asked for anything from any worldly person. Only once did he ask for a few rupees from somebody because of a pressing need. That person sent word to Shibli to the effect that he should ask for money from the same One before whom he begged for the wealth of Parmarth. In reply, Shibli sent him the message "You are base and the world, too, is base whereas God is good and the wealth of Parmarth is also good, and that is why I am asking for a base thing from a base source and a noble thing from a noble source".

One day he found some damp wood burning, from the other end of which was coming some watery discharge. Seeing this he said to people "If the fire of love for the Lord is burning within you, why do not tears flow from your eyes?"

Hazrat Shibli has said "Once my mind told me that I was very niggardly. To efface this stain, I took the vow that whatever the Lord was pleased to grant me thereafter, I would at once give it away in charity. No sooner than had I vowed like this that a certain person made an offering of fifty gold coins to me. I went out with those gold coins thinking that I would give them to the first Faqir I come across. It so happened that I first saw a blind Faqir who was being shaved by a barber. I wanted to give that money to him and said "This is for you." Feeling the gold coins with the fingers of his hands he told me "Give it to the barber." I was flabbergasted and said to the blind Faqir "Saheb ! those are gold coins." Hearing this, the Faqir said in a loud voice "I did tell you that you are a niggardly person." I felt very much ashamed to hear this and stretched my hand containing the gold coins towards the barber. He told me "I decided to shave this Faqir free and I won't accept that money." I thereupon picked up those gold coins and then threw them into a river.

Hazrat Shibli would not only himself keep his mind and senses under control but he would also ask others coming to him to do the same thing. Once he told his disciples "The Lord Himself gives the daily bread to His devotees and says that if anybody is inclined towards Him after controlling his passions, He arranges for his means of subsistence and daily bread from a source which he had never dreamt of and, if anybody reposes his trust in Him, He Himself is his sole prop and support." Hazrat Shibli left after giving these instructions, but the condition of those disciples became such that, for three days and nights, they would neither eat nor drink anything, waiting patiently all the time and saying that they would take only from the Lord and, in the mean time, remain sitting. On the third day, Shibli came again to them and told them "The Lord did not forbid you to move your hands and feet. He has created the earth for you. All you have to do is to follow the ways of life, and you will earn your subsistence, Let

that person who is the most honest and sincere amongst you go out in search of your means of subsistence. Perhaps the Lord will bestow His mercy on you." And so, those people sent one of them to the city.

Since that person had been starving for three days, he could not go round the lanes. Coming to the dispensary of a Christian physician, he took his seat behind the patients. When the crowd had thinned somewhat, the physician's eyes fell on that 'patient', too. He called the patient affectionately and asked him what his ailment was. That person was not used to begging. He stretched his hand towards the physician who, on feeling his pulse, could understand his ailment. Then, calling his servant, the physician ordered him to bring Halwá (a kind of sweet-meat) and bread from the market. After the servant had brought those things, the physician looked at the Faqir and told him "Take these things. They are your medicine." The Faqir thereupon said "You have diagnosed my disease correctly but there are forty others with me, suffering from the same disease." The physician sent his servant again and, after getting food for forty persons from the market asked the servant to go with the Faqir with the instruction that he should take the food to the place indicated by the Faqir. The physician, too, followed them unnoticed.

Hazrat Shibli who was engaged in the remembrance of the Lord's name and in making obeisance to Him along with his other thirtynine disciples, came out on hearing that food had come and, on seeing it, asked, "Will you take food sent by a Christian and give nothing in return?" Thereupon, they enquired "Hazrat, what can we give in exchange for this food?" His reply was "Pray for that person's well being." All carried out his order and raised their hands to bless the giver. That Christian physician was standing outside, watching all that was going on. He was deeply impressed. He came inside and became Hazrat Shibli's disciple.

In the beginning, Hazrat Shibli used to say that he

would fill the mouth of anybody saying Allah with sugar. Indeed, he continued doing so. After some time, he would fill with gold and silver the mouth of anyone who would say Allah. But, after a certain period, he started saying "I shall behead anyone uttering Allah's name." People asked him "What is all this?" His reply was "I first thought they were saying "Allah" sincerely. But now I realize that they were taking Allah's name out of greed for gold and silver and not from the bottom of their heart. I cannot stand anybody's taking Allah's name without due regard for it." If he saw Allah's name written anywhere, he would show great respect to it. A voice from heaven said "How long will you remain after the Name? Seek the Námí, the Lord, within." When he heard this, a fire of yearning and love for the Lord blazed in his heart.

Hazrat Shiblí left his mortal coil in 945 A.D. at the age of eightyseven.

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The first of these is the fact that the city of St. Louis is situated on the Mississippi River, which is the largest river in the world. This gives the city a strategic location for trade and commerce. The second is the fact that the city is situated on a high bluff, which gives it a natural defense against attack. The third is the fact that the city is situated in a fertile valley, which gives it a natural source of food and raw materials. The fourth is the fact that the city is situated in a region of rich natural resources, including coal, iron, and copper. The fifth is the fact that the city is situated in a region of rapid population growth, which gives it a large and diverse workforce. The sixth is the fact that the city is situated in a region of strong economic growth, which gives it a high standard of living. The seventh is the fact that the city is situated in a region of strong cultural and educational institutions, which gives it a high level of intellectual and artistic achievement. The eighth is the fact that the city is situated in a region of strong political and social stability, which gives it a high level of security and peace. The ninth is the fact that the city is situated in a region of strong international relations, which gives it a high level of global influence. The tenth is the fact that the city is situated in a region of strong environmental protection, which gives it a high level of natural beauty and sustainability.

The city of St. Louis is a unique and vibrant community, and it is proud to be a part of the world. We are committed to providing a high quality of life for all of our residents, and we are dedicated to creating a sustainable and prosperous future for our city and our region.

## PART 4

### DEVOTEES OF THE WESTERN COUNTRIES

#### (82) SAINT PETER

His original name was Simon. The name 'Peter', meaning rock, was given to him by Christ. He was Christ's Gurumukh\* or chief disciple.

Born in Baithsaida near lake Gennesaret in Palestine, he was a fisherman by profession, and it was while fishing in the sea of Galilee that he met Jesus for the first time, an event of supreme importance which brought about a complete transformation in his life, turning him from a devout Jew owing allegiance to John the Baptist into the most ardent follower and devotee of Christ. The master and the disciple had only to meet to be able to recognize each other. To Simon and his brother, Andrew, who was also a fisherman and was with him, Jesus said 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men'. What Christ really meant was that if they followed his instructions and perform the spiritual practices prescribed by him and also adopted his Saran (refuge) not only would they themselves attain salvation but they would be able to grant salvation to others, too. Christ's call shook Simon and his brother as if they had been struck by lightning, and they instantly threw away their fishing nets and followed Christ. They seemed to be only waiting for Christ's call.

According to another version, Jesus, once finding two empty fishing boats in the lake of Gennesaret, boarded one of them and when, at his command, its owner, Simon, took the boat out into the deep and cast his net there, he was rewarded with a rich haul of fish, though a moment earlier, he had been complaining that in spite of toiling the whole of the previous night he had to go empty handed. As Simon

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\* The perfect disciple who is to succeed his master.

fell at Jesus's feet convinced that the unexpected success was all due to him, he told Simon "Fear not ; from henceforth thou shalt catch men". Simon, thereafter, forsook all and followed Jesus.

The role which Simon was to fill later on in relation to Jesus was more clearly indicated by him in the course of his talks to his disciples on the coasts of the Caesarea Philippi. He asked his disciples "Who, do you think, I am ?" While all others said that he could be either John the Baptist or Elias or Jeremias or any one of the prophets, the same question, put by Christ to Simon, drew from him the immediate and spontaneous reply "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God". Jesus instantly cognized the faith and conviction which this answer bespoke and he congratulated Simon saying that blessed, indeed, was he for he had been able to recognize him not by looking at his body of flesh and blood but by the power of vision which the Lord, residing within that body, had endowed him with. On seeing Christ, Simon's inner eye had opened and this, in fact, was the cause of his faith and conviction.

It was this firm faith of Simon which Christ intended to make use of as the instrument for communicating his message to humanity and with this in view, he said to Simon "Thou art Peter (meaning rock), and upon this rock I will build my Church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it". Jesus really meant that, based on this kind of faith and conviction, he would build up his Satsang or congregation which the forces of Kal and Maya, that is, mind and matter, would not be able to destroy.

And it was also here that Christ wanted to give out that when he was gone, the work of redemption of Jivas (souls) would rest in the hands of his Gurumukh disciple, Peter, and this is what he meant when he said to him, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in

heaven". This would leave no one in doubt that, after Christ, Jivas could be admitted into the Lord's court only through the instrumentality of Peter. This illustrates the true relation between the Guru and his Gurumukh or the master and his disciple in so far as the work of redemption is concerned. Christ did not say that salvation would be attained by only reading holy books or that nobody need adopt any other Guru or preceptor after him.

However, as no man is perfect, Peter, too, had his lapses in relation to his master. One was his wellknown denial of Christ just before his crucification and the other, preceding it, was his failure to comply with Christ's command to keep awake when Christ, going to the mount of Olives just before his crucification, wanted to pray there alone while his other disciples, including Peter, were to keep awake at a distance from him. Thrice Christ went to pray and, each time, on returning to Peter and the others, he found them fast asleep. By this episode, Jesus wanted to show that though the spirit is always eager to meet the Lord, the body of flesh and blood in which it is encased, fails to co-operate with it.

Peter's denial of Christ is more pathetic and poignant. When Jesus, prior to his crucification, predicted to his disciples that they would all betray him, Peter had protested affirming that others might do so but he, never. Christ, thereupon, had bluntly told him "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice". And that is what happened. Peter, to save his own skin, hid himself amongst the servants in the palace of the high Priest Caiaphas before whom Jesus had been hauled up to face his trial on the charge of claiming to be the Son of God. And even as the mock trial was going on, Peter sat outside the palace when a damsel coming to him alleged that he was also with Jesus. Peter, however, denied, asserting that he did not follow what she was saying. Next, when he had gone out into the porch, another maid saw him and said he was also a companion of Jesus. Peter again denied on oath that he ever knew Jesus,

A group of people then came to him and said that, judging from his voice, they were sure that he, too, was with Jesus. Thereupon Peter cursed and swore that he did not know Jesus. And immediately the cock crew. Peter then went out and wept bitterly.

Peter's denial of Christ, though an obvious weakness in his character, has a much deeper significance inasmuch as it emphasizes the great importance of repentance in the spiritual development of a Jiva. Repentance is the most effective instrument for purification so necessary for a Jiva's spiritual progress. True repentance removes internal barriers, cuts asunder the curtains, and enables the spirit to pierce through the portal of death or the point of the cross and ascend to higher regions and it then becomes one with the master. That Peter wept bitterly after denying Christ is unmistakable evidence of his repentance for his lapse. And the fact that he was the first person before whom Christ appeared following his resurrection three days after his crucifixion shows that Christ had pardoned Peter for his lapse. Indeed, after resurrection, Jesus reiterated his previous declaration about Peter's highly spiritual status lest his denial of Jesus, though deeply repented, should have become detrimental to his prestige.

Peter was the seniormost of the twelve apostles of Christ and the most respected of them all.

Peter died a martyr's death in 67 A.D. He was crucified by Nero and buried in Nero's garden in the Vatican hill.

Peter had a family life and had many children.

### (83) SAINT PAUL

His original name was Saul. He was born of rich Jewish parents in the city of Tarsus in Cilicia (Asia Minor). He studied at Jerusalem under a Jewish priest called Gamaliel, where he received a thorough training in Jewish scriptures

and became an ardent and zealous Jew. He turned into a deadly enemy of Christianity and would pull out Christians, men and women, from their houses to be persecuted and often given capital punishment for the sake of their faith. With this kind of mission he once set out for Damascus planning to capture all the Christians there and bring them bound to Jerusalem for punishment. As he approached Damascus, a light from heaven suddenly came down and started shining round him. He fell on the ground and heard a voice saying "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He asked "Who are thou?" In answer, he heard "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Trembling and astonished, he asked what he should do. He was thereupon told to proceed to Damascus where the necessary instructions would be given to him. His companions stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. Saul got up but could see nothing and remained sightless (blind) for three days. His companions led him by the hand into Damascus.

In Damascus, there was a certain person called Ananias before whom the Lord (Christ) appeared in a vision asking him to go and meet Saul and also telling him "He is a chosen vassal unto me, to bear my name before the gentiles, and kings and the children of Israel". Ananias did as directed and as soon as he touched Saul, his eye-sight was restored. He was then baptized. Thus his journey to Damascus proved to be a turning point in his life, and from a cruel and zealous Jew he soon became an ardent follower of Christ.

After being baptized, he started preaching in the synagogues of Damascus that Christ was the Son of God. All who heard him were amazed, wondering if he were the same person who had until recently been tormenting and persecuting Christians in Jerusalem and had come to Damascus to take Christians bound to the chief priests in Jerusalem.

Saul, however, went on communicating the message of

Christ to the citizens of Damascus with ever-increasing zeal and enthusiasm. After quite some time, the Jews planned to kill him. With that purpose, they kept a strict vigil on the house in which he was staying but he got scent of their evil design and, at night, his companions were able to save him by taking him down by the wall in a basket.

Coming back to Jerusalem, Saul, that is, Paul tried to join the Christians there but they would not believe that he had embraced Christianity. However, when they were told how he had seen the Lord on his way to Damascus and He had spoken to him and how boldly he had preached in Damascus, they warmly welcomed him.

Paul gave the following memorable speech in Athens :

Ye Athenians, I find that in all matters, you are all too superstitious. As I was passing and having a look at your idols, I found an altar carrying the inscription 'To the Unknown God.' I shall give you the whereabouts of the 'God' you so ignorantly worship. God, who is the creator of the world and all its objects and the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made by man's hand. And since it is He who gives life and breath and everything else to all, He does not want to be worshipped by man's hands as though He was in need for something. And He has made of one blood men of all nationalities and the earth for them to dwell upon. He has determined their lifetimes and the bounds of their habitation so that they can seek Him, though, of course, He is not far from anyone of them, for, it is in Him that everybody lives and moves and has his being. And so, being the offspring of God, it would not be right for us to think that Godhead is like gold or silver or stone fashioned into idols by man's craft and device. So, repent ye."

Although Paul was warned of possible danger in Jerusalem, he did return to Jerusalem from Ephesus. In

Jerusalem, the Jews, who were his enemies, stirred up local people against him and surrounded him but he was saved by a Roman chieftain. Afterwards, a governor called Felix imprisoned him and he remained in jail for two years. When another governor, Festus, took charge, he, with a view to pleasing people, wanted to send him to Jerusalem so that he could be tried there. But Paul argued that since he was a Roman citizen, he had the right to be tried by Caesar only. So, he was sent to Rome where he remained in Jail for two years. His associates used to meet him off and on and they went on trying to secure his release from jail. It is said that he was beheaded outside the gate of the city of Rome in 67 A.D. That was the time when the Roman emperor Nero was perpetrating all kinds of tyranny on Christians.

St. Paul was one of the twelve Apostles of Christ and, perhaps next only to St. John the Evangelist, he was the greatest religious genius that Christianity has ever known. The main theme of his preaching was the salvation of the human spirit through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who suffered punishment for the sin of the whole humanity, thus making salvation possible for those who believe in his sacrifice on the Cross. He remained unmarried all his life though he was not against matrimony.

#### (84) SAINT AUGUSTINE

He was the foremost of Christian preceptors who tried to institutionalise the Christian faith. He was born on November 13, 354 A. D. in the town of Thagaste, in Numidia proconsularis, where today stands the Arab village of Souk-Ahras, near the eastern border of Algeria. Augustine had a pagan father, Patricius, and a Christian mother, Monica. As a child, Augustine was sent to school in Thagaste. At the age of eleven, he went to Madamos for further studies. There he mainly studied pagan literature. In 370 A. D., he was sent to the University of Carthage where he first studied rhetoric with a view to becoming a lawyer, but soon decided to devote himself exclusively to literary pursuits. He made

a thorough study of Latin and also went through the works of Aristotle, Plato and other philosophers. He was particularly influenced by Plato's writings.

During his years in Carthage, Augustine became a member of the pseudo-Christian sect known as the Manicheans. The Manichean religion took its name from Mani, its founder, a Babylonian, who lived from 215 to 277 A. D. Augustine became an enthusiastic missionary of the Manichean faith and prevailed upon many of his friends to embrace this religion. In time, he was able to break loose from this sect and later on he became its greatest opponent.

From 376 to 383 A. D., Augustine taught in Carthage and then set out for Rome. In Rome, too, he worked as a teacher and continued his Manichean associations. In 384 A. D., he received an official appointment as Professor of rhetoric in the imperial city of Milan. During this period, he grew more and more dissatisfied with his moral, intellectual and spiritual state and was finally drawn towards Christianity.

However, he was faced with moral and intellectual problems in accepting that faith. His main moral problem was that he had a concubine and a son by her. Intellectually, he was a Neo-Platonist and did not think that the Christian faith really measured up to philosophy. At Rome he came in contact with Bishop Ambrose of Milan and his powerful preaching created great restlessness in him. He went through a period of acute mental agony. He was living in immorality and even after his intellectual problems had been solved, this difficulty had to be met. In his famous book "Confessions", he writes "I flung myself down under a fig tree and gave free course to my tears. I sent up these sorrowful cries, how long, how long? Tomorrow and tomorrow? Why not now? Why not this very hour make an end to my uncleanness? I was weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl — I know not which — coming from the neighbouring

house, chanting over and over again, 'Pick it up, read it ; pick it up, read it'. Immediately I ceased weeping.....I got to my feet, for I could not but think that this was a divine command to open the Bible and read the first passage I should light upon.....I snatched it up, opened it and in silence read the first paragraph on which my eyes fell : 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof'. (Romans 13 : 14).....Instantly as the sentence ended, there was infused into my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the doubt and gloom vanished away”.

This happened in 386. During the night of Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday, April 24 and 25, 387, Augustine was baptized a Christian by St. Ambrose, and with that, Augustine broke with his evil past and abandoned his worldly career.

Augustine returned to Africa in 388. Early in 391 he went to the nearby seaport of Hippo Regius where he was ordained a priest. He became consecrated coadjutor Bishop of Hippo in 396, and on the death of Bishop Valerius that year, he took over as Bishop of Hippo, which post he held till his death.

The four decades spent by Augustine as a priest and Bishop were a time of intense activity as a thinker, writer and spiritual leader. To combat the Manicheans, he wrote some of his most important works. Against the Palagian exaggeration of man's natural powers to do good and its errors with regard to the necessity of divine grace, Augustine provided the leadership and learning that were necessary. His writings in refutation of Palagianism have earned for him the title of doctor of grace and constitutes one of his greatest contributions to theology.

During these years when Augustine was combating the Manicheans, Donatists, Palagians and others, in addition to carrying out all the manifold duties of his office, catastrophic events were taking place in Italy. Under increasingly difficult conditions, he continued his work up to the end. Death came to him on August 28, 430, while a victorious Vandal army lay siege to Hippo.

Augustine wrote many books. Apart from "Confessions", already referred to, which is a kind of spiritual autobiography, Augustine's other famous book is the "City of God" in which he regards the universe as two cities, city of man and city of God. City of man is based on selfish interests, pride, etc., and city of God on self denial and sacrifice.

Some of his teachings and sayings are :

'Truth' is the emperor of the kingdom of devotees and 'Love' is its law.

God is eternal. He existed before all temporal periods. Matter did not exist eternally and independently of God. He created matter as well as the forms in which it is found.

God's grace is necessary even for the recognition of sin and cry for pardon.

If you have faith in what I say, come with me. If you have doubts, seek and enquire with me. If you realize your mistake, come to me. If you discover my mistake, call me to you.

Thou hast made us, O Lord, for Thee, and till we merge in Thee, we can have no peace at heart.

Whoever is not with the Lord must be with the devil, for there is no halting place between the Lord and the devil.

Likewise, anyone who has not ensured his location in

the Lord's region, is bound to suffer pain and agony in hell as there is no halting place in between.

### (85) T H O M A S á K E M P I S

Thomas á Kempis was born in 1380 to father John and mother Gertrude in Kempen, a small town in Rhineland about thirty miles from Cologne. He received his early education at Kempen Grammar School where his class-mates used to call him Thomas from Kempen and this is how he came to be known later on as Thomas á Kempis.

He left home at the early age of thirteen to attend the school at Deventer run by 'The Brethren of the Common Life', an organization established by Gerard Groote with the approval of Pope Gregory XI. For seven years he remained at Deventer under the guidance of Florentius who was by that time not only the rector of the organized community of Brethren in that town but also the leader of the whole movement after Groote. Florentius used to be particularly kind to Thomas throughout the period of his study in Deventer, helping him materially and spiritually. During this time, Thomas came in close contact with many of Groote's followers and had ample opportunity for observing their practices and listening to their discussions on spiritual life. The atmosphere of the place made a profound and abiding impression on him. He used to note down from the conversations of Florentius and his associates many points concerning spiritual life and devotion much of which he later on incorporated in his own devotional works. He had great love and admiration for Florentius and later on wrote on his life and teachings. Florentius' self-discipline, humility and devotion inspired him to dedicate himself to a life of religion and spirituality.

In 1399 A. D., on the advice of Florentius, Thomas á Kempis entered the House (monastery) of the Canons Regular on Mount S. Agnes at Agneitenberg, near Zwolle. His brother John was a Prior there already. As blood brothers

were not permitted to be full members of the same religious community, Thomas remained for six years a Donatus (a kind of lay brother) but when John was due to be transferred elsewhere, he was in 1406 accepted as a Novice and soon received the Habit. In 1413, he was ordained priest. Some time after, he was elected Sub-Prior, and held that office during the troubled years 1429-32, when there were disturbances over the election to the See of Utrecht, and the canons of St. Agnes were forced to leave their house and go into exile in Frisia. Some time after their return Thomas became a steward but he was relieved of this office which was uncogential to his devout and unworldly nature. Later he was appointed Novice-Master and in 1448 he again held the office of Sub-Prior.

Amidst the duties and responsibilities of the offices he held, he found time not only to copy several scriptures and revise many books for the use of the house but also to write a large number of works of his own such as 'A Meditation on the Incarnation of Christ', 'Sermons to Novices', 'Spiritual Exercises', 'The Elevation of the Mind', 'The Soliloquy of the Soul', 'The Garden of Roses', 'On True Compunction of Heart', 'On Solitude and Silence', 'On the discipline of Cloister', 'The Imitation of Christ', and several biographies. 'The Imitation of Christ' was his master piece which, after the Bible, is the book most widely read by Catholics. It is a boon to true seekers. It affirms that all good stems from love and that lack or deficiency of love is the root cause of all evils. Perusal of this book has brought peace to innumerable souls, and generations of men and women of all classes have been deeply moved and influenced by it.

He was an eloquent preacher and a wise confessor. Modest and retiring both by nature and conviction, he sought no high office or fame. As he mentions in his book 'Spiritual Exercises', silence was his friend, work his companion, and prayer his aid, and he was well content to work unnoticed. He was essentially a devotee filled with love for

the Lord, and a wonderful comforter of those in temptation and trouble.

The gist of his teachings is as follows :

‘For anyone who seeks to follow Christ whole-heartedly, separation from worldly knowledge and secular training is necessary. This has to be replaced by a humble desire for knowledge of God, which can only be attained by self-knowledge and self-aborrence’.

The qualities which one must develop are ‘an utter disregard of the world, a fervent desire for progress in virtue, a love of discipline, the practice of penitence, readiness to obey, denial of self, and acceptance of any adversity for the love of Christ’.

‘It is from Christ that we receive the grace we need if we are to live in the above spirit and his presence is the only true and real joy in this earthly life. One must rely less on one’s own effort, and rest quietly in the indwelling presence of Christ. Fellowship with Christ can be attained only with sacrifice on our part. Sin and worldliness should be driven away. We must school ourselves to accepting the hardship of the way of the Cross to which all followers of Christ are called. We must face the fact that suffering is an inevitable part of the Christian life. Spiritual joy cannot be experienced without the pain of the Cross’.

He died in 1471 A. D. at the ripe old age of ninety-one.

### (86) S W E D E N B O R G

Emanuel Swedenborg was born in Stockholm (Sweden) on January 29, 1688 A. D. and was the third child of his parents. His father was a bishop and a man of distinction. Two events which particularly moved him during his otherwise placid and happy boyhood days were, firstly, a terrible fire which destroyed his father’s large stone-house newly

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built and, secondly, his mother's death. He was very much attached to his sister Anna.

Entering the University of Upsala at the early age of eleven, he at first studied philosophy but soon developed a keen interest in mathematics and the physical sciences and acquired considerable proficiency in these subjects. After leaving the Upsala University in 1709, he proceeded to England in 1710 for further studies, and there, mathematics and astronomy seem to have absorbed most of his interest. He also gained considerable acquaintance with English literature. Swedenborg was at the same time a cosmologist, a physicist, a chemist, an anatomist and a physiologist. He was a geologist of great distinction and king Charles XII appointed him an Assessor of the Board of Mines.

In 1721, he started upon a lengthy foreign tour to study the mines and manufactures of other lands. While on this tour, he published several scientific and philosophical works and continued this kind of activity with great enthusiasm on returning home. His publications won for him a great name, and in 1734, the Academy of Sciences of St. Petersburg invited him to become a corresponding member. He was also one of the first elected members of the Royal Academy of Sciences in his own country. Queen Ulrica Eleanor conferred on him the rank of nobility which gave him a seat in the House of Nobles.

Swedenborg met Newton whose "Principia" made a great impression on him. From a survey of the universe as a macrocosm, Swedenborg was led to the study of the nature of Infinity, its connection with the finite and the soul of man. He came to the view that in man the world is concentrated, and in him, as in a microcosm, the whole universe may be contemplated from the beginning to the end.

During 1743-45, his outlook underwent a fundamental change. From the natural sciences, he became drawn towards religion and things spiritual. The Voice of God was revealed

to him as the Word of God in its internal and spiritual sense. With tremendous internal struggles of soul, in which worldly and intellectual ambitions fought with the impulse to this higher calling, days and nights were passed in agony until on an Easter Sunday in 1744, he went to the Holy Supper and heard the hymn 'Jesus is my best of friends'. In the restless night that followed there finally came a feeling of holiest peace as if he were in heaven and he could only cry out "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts ! Praise and honour and glory be to the Highest !" Then he said "God's will be done ! I am thine and not mine. God gives His grace for this work, for it is not mine.

The remarkable feature of the change in Swedenborg's interest from the science of nature to that of the spiritual world was the abnegation of all pride of scientific invention or creation. His self-renunciation was not that of an uneducated or semi-educated monk but of a man whose understanding, sharpened by rigorous training in all the knowledge which the world could offer, was willing to accept and practise supernatural knowledge.

He has claimed to have made direct contacts with the angels and the spiritual world, not only in dreams and supernatural visions but also in his normal waking life. He has given a vivid description of his experience of near-death and has said "I was brought into a sense of insensibility as to the bodily senses, thus almost into the state of dying ; yet the interior life with thought remaining entire, so that I perceived and retained in memory the things which occurred, and which occur to those who are resuscitated from the dead.....Especially I was given to perceive.....that there was a drawing and.....pulling of.....mind, thus of my spirit from the body." According to him, even when the bodily functions of respiration and circulation cease, "still man does not die, but is only separated from the corporeal part which was of use to him in the world.....Man, when he dies, only passes from one world to another,"

According to Swedenborg, the world is vibration,—action and reaction. The Universe is the theatre of altruistic love. Force originates in will, and the primal will is the Divine Love. Life is love emanating from wisdom into created spheres. These spheres are not on a continuous plane, but are in discreet degrees. Under the same law cosmos is a system of spheres emanating from the Infinite Divine.

Swedenborg believed that God is in all spiritual things without losing Himself in them ; He is in all things and the source of all things, and yet these things are not Himself. According to Swedenborg, spirit is present in all matter, giving it its form and all its force, without itself becoming matter, or, matter by any process of refinement, ever becoming spirit.

He felt that the Lord was commissioning him to make known his doctrines to mankind at large. The agency was to be a New Church, organised not as a body separate from the existing Church, but as a spiritual fraternity of all those who accepted his doctrines, no matter what their ecclesiastical allegiance was. Swedenborg's theology of the New Church proceeds from a profound discussion of Absolute Being to the doctrine of the Lord, the Redeemer, the Holy Spirit and the Divine Trinity ; the sacred scripture ; the catechism ; faith, charity, free determination; repentance, reformation, regeneration ; Imputation, Baptism, the Holy Supper; the consummation of the Age, the coming of the Lord, and the New Heaven and the New Church.

So distinctive are the principles which he enunciated in developing the concept of the New Church that they have given a severe jolt to orthodox Christians and, though not originally intended by Swedenborg himself, led to the establishment, in later years, of a separate cult or church which is now known as the New Church popularly called Swedenborgianism. It differs from orthodox Christianity on the fundamental ground of the nature of Divinity. What in the orthodox Christian's view is vague and nebulous, he has

made emphatically clear, not only on the basis of his own observations in the other world but also by philosophic deductions from facts. Swedenborg claimed that the principles enunciated by him are in complete accord with the teachings of the Bible, but orthodox Christians failed to understand and appreciate him, rather, they opposed him. Swedenborg's followers, on the other hand, believe that the prophesy of Christ's incarnating himself a second time has been fulfilled through Swedenborg's bringing out the true and inner meaning of the teachings of the Bible in his extensive writings.

Ever since resigning his position on the Board of Mines in 1747, he embarked on intensive study of the scriptures and on writing assiduously in defence of his doctrines and teachings. Amongst his more important works are : *Arcana Coelestia* (8 volumes) ; *The earths in the Universe* ; *The New Jerusalem and its Heavenly Doctrines* ; *Heaven and Hell* ; *Divine Love and Wisdom* ; *The Apocalypse Revealed* ; *The True Christian Religion*.

He was a bachelor and used to take only bread, milk and vegetables. After many journeys abroad, chiefly to Holland and England for publishing his works, he settled in London in his last days. He prophesized when his death would take place. He passed away in London in 1772 at the age of eightyfour and was buried in the Swedish Church in Prince Square, but in 1908 his remains were removed to his native soil and deposited in the Cathedral at Upsala.

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## PART 5

### SANTS, SADHS, MAHATMAS AND TRUE AND PERFECT FAQIRS

#### (87) M A N S Ú R

Generally, along with the son's name, the name of the father is also mentioned. But in the case of "Husain Bin Mansúr" (Husain, the son of Mansúr), a special and interesting point was that Husain had his name merged and lost in that of his father, and chose to remain Mansúr and Mansúr only, neither Husain nor "Husain Bin Mansúr" (Husain, the son of Mansúr).

The father Mansur, was an inhabitant of a village called Bezá in Iran. His son, Mansur, was born in the same village. But his parents did not stay there for long. It is said that, in Iraq, he developed sense and understanding. He had to leave Iraq, too, soon after he had begun his studies and, going to the city of Shustar, he became a pupil of Suhel Bin Abdulla there. After having studied under his guidance for eighteen years, he went to Iraq and Arabia.

There, he started living in the company of Sufis. He developed a liking for sitting near Mahatmas (great souls) and wise men like Junaïd Baghdadi. He then went to Basrá and remained there performing the Sewa of Umar Bin Usmán. From here, he started getting dyed in a different colour. Umar Bin Usman was a wise man of a very high order and had written many excellent books on the philosophical principles of Sufis but he would never part with those books nor would he show them to anybody. Mansur somehow happened to lay his hands upon them. He read them, and as a result, his internal condition underwent such a transformation that he started speaking openly and to the general public about matters which Sufis would not talk about before all. How could the ordinary humanity who

had in view only outer aspects of things and was ignorant of inner secrets, understand such matters ? People could not tolerate even listening to such things. And so, they all turned Mansur's enemies. And when they came to know that this action of Mansur was the result of the training he had received under Hazrat Umar Bin Usman, they started disliking the latter also. Hazrat Umar Bin Usman, too, very much disliked this misadventure on the part of Mansur and he became so displeased with him that he expelled him from his congregation.

Mansur then left Basrá and, coming to Baghdad, again joined Hazrat Junaid's Satsang where too he did not refrain from speaking about those very matters. One day when he put some questions to Hazrat Junaid, the latter said that the day was not far off when a stake would become red with his blood. That was a hint that Mansur would be pierced by an impaling stake in future. Hearing Junaid, Mansur also, filled with zeal and enthusiasm, replied to Hazrat Junaid "Yes, the impaling stake will no doubt be red with my blood, but before that happens, you too will have to give up this garb of a Faqir". And this is what actually happened. The prophesies of both the Mahatmas came out true in due course.

After the above encounter with Junaid, Mansur left Baghdad also and came to Shustar. There, such change came over his nature and attitude that his previous philosophical and spiritual bent practically vanished and he started leading the life of a learned man. He made a great impression on people and began to command honour and respect everywhere. But this state of affairs had hardly continued for a short time that Mansur was again filled with his former zeal and enthusiasm for matters spiritual. Leaving aside everything, he started travelling and made journeys to far-off places giving Jivas the benefit of his teachings and instructions. He revealed them the right path. Large crowds used to gather round him. Being soon fed up, he

sent all away and applied himself assiduously to rigid abstinences and hard spiritual practices. One's hair stands on end on hearing of the hardship he underwent and the amount of labour and toil he put in.

For full one year he used to remain standing with bare body in shivering cold and under the blazing sun, so much so that his skin started cracking, and the fat in his body melted and started flowing out. He came to India also in the course of his travels. On returning from India, the colour in which he had been getting drenched for years stuck very fast on him. He remained submerged and lost in true love all the time. No one could understand anything of what he uttered while in that state of withdrawal and intoxication. As a result, all started disliking him. Wherever he went, he was greeted with slogans 'Get away from here'. It has been written that he had been to fifty cities in this condition but could not find a place to stay in anyone of them, being driven away from all of them. Ultimately, he went to Baghdad again and stayed there.

He met Hazrat Shibli to whom he briefly explained his internal condition and said "All objects and beings in the entire creation have got hidden from my view and I behold only my Beloved and nothing else, so much so that there is no trace of even Mansur". Shibli advised him that one should keep one's Friend and Beloved hidden within one. This advice had appealed him very much, and, with great efforts, he tried to hide his internal condition and experiences, but how after all, was this possible? He, all of a sudden, started crying out 'Anal Haq', 'Anal Haq', which made people dumbfounded. 'Anal Haq' means 'I am the Lord'. Ulmás, learned men well versed in Quran, began to plead with him that his utterances were those of an infidel. But he would not pay heed to and understand anything but Haq. The advice of the Ulmas had no effect on him; on the other hand, his condition of intoxication grew more and more intense, so much so that one day he came out with the

assertion "I am He whom I seek and from whom I seek. When you see me, you really see Him, and likewise, when you see Him, it is me that you see".

People then became even more infuriated. Ulmas started complaining why Mansur was not being punished. They had consultations with the Sufis, too. Ultimately the Maulvis (Mohammedan priests) gave the verdict that he was an infidel in accordance with the religious scriptures of Mohammedans. Mansur, however, kept mum, and said nothing for or against the charge levied against him. People interpreted his silence as a confession of his guilt. And so, Mansur was regarded as a confirmed infidel. But when was Mansur at all afraid of being called an infidel? He did not care in the least for the verdict against him. In fact, he did not even have any idea as to what was going on. And he went on saying 'Haq Haq Anal Haq' in the same care-free manner, so much so that there was now a definite possibility of his imprisonment and execution.

Mansur's enemies were bent upon seeking capital punishment for him. Allámá Abul Abbáh was an Ulma of great distinction. He was at that time the Muftí, too, that is, he used to give decisions and pass verdicts in accordance with the religious scriptures of Mohammedans. Mansur's enemies approached him and asked for his opinion about Mansur. He gave no reply and kept mum. But being hard pressed, he declared that he was unable to say anything concerning Mansur. Being disappointed there, Mansur's enemies went to the minister of the Caliph and gave the matter a political bias in addition to infidelity. They said that there were many people with Mansur and there was a danger of some harm being done to the Sultanate. They placed before the minister all kinds of evidence, true and false. The minister was convinced to such an extent that he turned an enemy of Mansur and started trying to extort a decision from the Ulma to the effect that capital punishment should be given to Mansur.

At first the Ulma were not prepared to recommend Mansur's execution straightway. They refused to oblige Mansur's enemies saying that so long as they could not produce anything written by Mansur against the Shariyat (religious scriptures of Mohammedans), the declaration of capital punishment could not be issued against him. This was, of course, nothing difficult for Mansur's sworn enemies. They were ultimately able to produce a book written by Mansur which contained some statements against the Shariyat. The minister produced that book before the congregation of Ulmas and, after calling Mansur, asked him "Why did you write this against the Shariyat?" Mansur replied "It is not my own writing, I have only copied it from such and such book". Thereupon, from the mouth of Káji (judge) Abu Umar Maqqí, came out the words "Thou 'Kushtaní' (cursed one)! I have gone through that book from beginning to end, but I have not come across such statements there". This was an excuse or opportunity good enough for Mansur's enemies. The Caliph's minister instantly affirmed that the declaration of capital punishment for Mansur had already been issued inasmuch as the Kaji had accosted Mansur as a 'kushtani' (meaning a cursed fellow who deserves execution). The minister said "Kaji Saheb! Please issue the declaration in writing that Mansur's execution would be right and proper, in accordance with law". The Kaji tried his best to avoid, but the minister was after Mansur's blood. He forced the Kaji who, mindful of the minister's displeasure, wrote out his findings on which the Ulma put their signature.

The minister put Mansur in prison and with a view to getting the Caliph's permission for Mansur's execution, informed him of all details and the proceedings of the court. But the Caliph said that so long as Hazrat Junaid Baghdadi did not give in writing that Mansur deserves to be executed, he would not issue the necessary order. The minister thereupon spoke to Hazrat Junaid who, too, did not think it proper to get involved in this matter. But ultimately, he

doffed the garb of Faqirs and donned that of Ulmas, and then gave the order in writing, "Judging his outer conduct and behaviour, verdict for capital punishment can be issued, but his internal condition is known to the Lord alone". It is said that this was the fulfilment of Mansur's prophesy, made earlier that the impaling stake would no doubt become red with his blood but Hazrat Junaid, too, would have to change his garb then. But according to some, this account is entirely wrong and, as evidence, they assert that Hazrat Junaid had left his mortal coil before Mansur was pierced by the impaling stake. Be that as it may, the Caliph withheld the sentence of Mansur's execution up to one year and the latter had to pass this period in prison.

While he was locked up in prison, Ibn Attár sent him word through a messenger to the effect that he should ask for pardon and, if he did that, he would be set free. Mansur's reply was that the very person who was to seek pardon was not there.

Many miracles came to light while Mansur was in prison, the last one being that he set free all his fellow prisoners. As he pointed his finger towards the wall, it burst open and the prisoners escaped. One of them asked him "Why do you remain inside and not come out?" He replied "You are the caliph's prisoners, but I am the prisoner of Allah. You can be set free, but not I." It is said that when this information reached the caliph, he issued the order of Mansur's execution.

After being kept in prison for full one year, Mansur was taken to the execution ground on 24 Zikkád 309 Hijri, that is, in 921 A. D. and the desire of Mansur's enemies was fulfilled. The day he was pierced by the impaling stake, unimaginable huge crowds had collected in Baghdad. The caliph's minister had given orders to the executioner that he should first give Mansur one thousand lashes. If he died as a result, it would be all right, otherwise, he should be given another one thousand lashes. If he did not die even then, he

should be pierced by the impaling stake. And this is what was done. The Lord's loving devotee took all the two thousand lashes without even uttering a sigh of pain and he finally gave his life pierced by the impaling stake.

When he was taken to the execution ground for putting an end to his life, he was manacled in very heavy hand-cuffs but, even then, he moved forward with consummate ease. On coming near the impaling stake, he cast one glance on the crowd and gave out the cry of "Haq Haq Anal Haq." At that time, a certain Faqir went forward and asked him, "What is love?" His reply was, "You will see that to-day, tomorrow and the day after." What he meant was that the Lord's loving devotee would be pierced by the impaling stake that day, then, next day, he would be burnt and reduced to ashes and, the day after, his ashes would be scattered to the winds. And this is what happened. He told one of his disciples that he should keep his mind suppressed under the weight of love and devotion for the Lord, obeisance to Him and other spiritual practices so that it is not inclined towards evil deeds. To his son, he said that to breathe even once without remembering Haq would be utter perversion.

On reaching the impaling stake, Mansur kissed it and, on mounting the stair-case, said "I have come up the stair-case meant for the brave, that is, these are the steps for going up to the Lord."

After this, everyone in the crowd started pelting Mansur with stones. Shibli, too, threw a flower at him, keeping the Shariyat in view. As soon as the flower hit Mansur, he cried 'Ah' in pain. People asked him, "How is this, for you did not say 'Ah' when the stones hit you?" His reply was "Those who pelted me with stones are ignorant and helpless, but Shibli is in the know of things, and so, the flower with which he hit me appeared to me to be heavy."

After life had departed from his body, the sound of

Anal Haq began to come out of it. With blood dripping from the body, the word Anal Haq was being written on the ground. People said that this was something very inauspicious. And so, the body was burnt. But, from the ashes, the sound of Anal Haq started emanating. This was a warning about the impending calamity. Ultimately, the ashes were thrown into the river Dajlá, but as soon as that was done, the sound of Anal Haq started coming from the water and there was soon flood in the river. The city was in danger of being submerged in flood-water.

Mansur had foretold his servant that these people would throw his ashes into the river, as a result of which it would become agitated and swell on the side of Baghdad, submerging the whole city. He therefore had given instructions to the servant that when he found the situation like this, he should forthwith point his (Mansur's) shirt towards the river. So, when the servant saw this kind of situation developing, he did as directed, whereupon the river's agitation subsided and the water came down to its usual level.

Hazrat Shibli has said that he once saw Mansur in a dream whom he asked, "What happened to your associates and enemies?" Mansur's reply was, "Mercy has been bestowed on both, for both were helpless. Those who recognised me could not help associating with me, and those who did not recognise me, had to act in a manner which would be in accord with the Shariyat."

Mansur has written a number of voluminous and difficult treatises. People asked him "What and how is the path to the Lord?" He replied "It is a matter of just two steps. In one step, you break away from this world and reach the other world and, in another step, you leave the other world and reach the Lord." When people asked him what patience really meant, his reply was that it consisted in a person's not giving out one cry of 'Oh' even if his hands and legs were severed from his body and he was pierced by the impaling stake.

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## (88) KHWÁJÁ MUINUDDÍN CHISHTÍ

Hazrat Garíb Nawáz (ever kind to the poor) Muinuddín Chishtí was born at a place called Sanjar in Sístan on the 14th day of the month of Rajab in 537 Hijri corresponding to 1143 A. D. The name of his father was Saiyad Gayásuddín Hasan and that of his mother Bibi Máhe Noor. From the age of seven, Hazrat Khwaja stayed in Khurásán and received his education there. His father died when he was fourteen years old. As paternal property, he inherited a garden and a wind-mill, the income out of which was sufficient for him to be able to live quite comfortably. He used to command considerable respect in the city also.

One day when Khwaja Saheb was sitting in his garden, a Faqir, Ibrahim Qandozi, came to him. Khwaja Saheb received the Faqir very warmly, and taking him to a nice spot and getting him comfortably seated, offered him a bunch of grapes. The Faqir took them with much relish and, then, after chewing a few grapes, gave them to Khwaja Saheb who took them without the slightest hesitation. The Lord alone knows what effect the Faqir Saheb's saliva had but it so happened that the moment the chewn grapes went down Khwaja Saheb's throat a striking transformation took place in him. He lost all interest in the world at once and, after giving away with utter abandon whatever he could get on selling his garden and wind-mill, he left his hearth and home.

Going to Hárún, he remained engaged in the Sewa of Hazrat Usmán Chishti. Association with Khwaja Usman gave such intense pleasure and joy to Khwaja Saheb that he spent full twenty years and a half performing his Sewa. Wherever Khwaja Usman would go, he would accompany him, carrying Khwaja Usman's baggage on his head.

After having met hundreds of Faqirs, Auliyás and Sufis at many places on the way, Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti came to India in the company of some soldiers of Shahábuddín Ghorí and settled down in Ajmer. At that time, he was 52 years old.

In Ajmer, Khwaja Saheb became engrossed in spiritual practices and ultimately attained the status of a Sadh by the standards of Sant Mat. So assiduously did he apply himself to his spiritual practices that for seventeen years at a stretch he did not have a wink of sleep at night, but would remain lost in Dhyan (meditation) all the time. He would open his eyes only when called loudly.

Khwaja Saheb established an alms-house in Ajmer which is the first of its kind in India. He left his mortal coil at an age of about ninety eight. His mausoleum has been built in Ajmer. Every year, a big Melá (congregation) is held there, which is visited by thousands coming from distant places.

It is said about Khwaja Saheb that he was found dead in his room on the 6th of Rajab in 633 Hijri (March, 1232 A. D ). Since the doors of the room had not been opened for six days, it is not possible to say definitely on which of these six days he passed away. It is for this reason that his annual Urs (anniversary) is held on all six days from 1st to 6th Rajab every year.

Khwaja Saheb led a very pure life. He used to take a small quantity of simple food and put on very simple dress (a cloak only), which he would himself patch up if and when torn at any place.

Khwaja Saheb has left behind numerous poetical compositions and discourses which are of a very high order. He has said that the Lord is friendly with a person who is friendly with poverty, starvation and illness.

Translation of a Ghazal composed by Khwaja Saheb in praise of Nám or Shabd is given below.

When I saw the power of the Lord's Name (Nám), I sacrificed my heart and soul before IT. IT is my Guru's Nám. The thirst of the thirsty was quenched

by the current of Nám, such a fountain of ambrosia IT is. (1)

Nám and Námí (The name and the one whose name it is) are one and the same. Make no difference between the two. Nám reflects the Beloved's Form. Such is the power of Nám. (2)

Associate with Nam, if you are longing for the Lord's Darshan, for, association with Nam is association with Him. (3)

If you constantly rub the mirror of your heart with Nam, you will see the Lord's refulgence reflected on it. (4)

Know, ye, for certain that if your mind is lost in the contemplation of Nam, you have been already blessed with the Lord's association. (5)

And if you soar above depending on the strength and power of Nam, you will gain access to the Lord's region. (6)

Never be slothful in performing Sumiran of Guru's Nam. If you have love for Nam, love for the Lord is sure to dawn on you. (7)

### (89) S H A M S T A B R E Z

He was a born Saint. His name was Hazrat Mohammed Bin Malik Dád and his nick-name Shams-Uddín Tabrezí. His father's name was Aláuddín. Shams Tabrez had his education in Tabrez. Unlike other Sufis, he did not follow the tradition of making disciples and initiating people, but would take rounds in cities like a merchant. Wherever he went, he would stop at some inn meant for caravans and, after shutting the doors of his room, remain lost in Dhyan. As a means of livelihood, he would sometimes weave trouser-strings and, by selling them, defray his daily expenses.

Once he prayed, "Oh Lord ! Bless me such that I get a special disciple who will be able to put up with my company". A voice from heaven said "Go to Rúm". In those days Asia Minor used to be called Rúm. Shams Tabrez at once started on his journey and, on reaching Koniya, stayed at an inn, where Maulána Rúm came with great pomp and splendour to meet him. Shams Tabrez realized that he was the person hinted at by the voice from heaven.

Apart from this, there are other versions also of his meeting with Maulana Rum.

It is written in Jawáhar Muzziyá, which is the first and the most authoritative treatise on the U'lmá of Hanif that one day Maulana Rum was sitting in his room along with his disciples and there were heaps of books all over the place. By chance Shams Tabrez came there and, after mutual greetings, took his seat. Turning towards Maulana Rum and pointing towards the books, he asked, "What are these ?" Maulana Rum replied, "They are things about which you know nothing". Hardly had he finished saying this, when all the books caught fire. Maulana Rum asked, "What is all this ?" From Shams Tabrez, at once came the reply, "This is something which you won't understand".

According to another story, Maulana Rum was once sitting by the side of a water tank with some books before him. Shams Tabrez asked, "What sort of books are these ?" Maulana Rum replied, "They contain propositions and comments on them. What have you to do with them ?" Shams Tabrez thereupon picked up all the books and threw them into the tank. Maulana Rum became very angry and blurted out "O Darvesh ! you have destroyed treasures which cannot now be obtained by any means. There were such rare things in the books that one can hardly get anything equivalent in exchange". At this, Shams Tabrez thrust his hand in the tank and, taking out all the books from it, kept them on the ground. The fun was that all the books were

as dry as ever, there being no trace of any moisture on them. Maulana Rum was dumbfounded. Shams Tabrez said "This is something to do with the state of intense spiritual withdrawal and elevation. What do you know about it?" After this incident, Maulana Rum became one of Shams Tabrez's admirers.

In the course of his travels, Shams Tabrez came to Multán in Punjab. Multan in those days was wellknown for four things.

In Multan four nice things are to be found—  
dust, heat, Faqirs and graveyards all around.

Faqirs and Auliyas could be found there in large numbers. The most famous amongst them was Bahábul Haq who used to be called 'Khudá Dost' meaning the friend of the Lord. As soon as Shams Tabrez came to Multan, he filled one cup up to the brim with milk and sent it to Shams Tabrez, hinting that there was no longer any scope for more Faqirs in Multan and Shams Tabrez might better seek shelter in some other city. Shams Tabrez, too, was a perfect Faqir. Instantly, he read between the lines, and returned the cup as it was, with some rose-petals put on the milk, purporting to mean that just as the rose-petals had found a place in the cup along with the milk, he, too, would get himself accommodated in the assembly of lovers.

For some days, 'Khuda Dost' Bahabul Haq kept quiet but when he failed to understand the 'Hamá Ost' (He alone is everything) principle enunciated by Shams Tabrez, he became cross, and turning Shams Tabrez's enemy, issued a declaration to the effect that he was an infidel.

In those days, the people of Multan used to swear by 'Khuda Dost' Bahabul Haq who wielded great influence on the city. There was great excitement in the city as soon as Bahabul Haq's declaration was issued. The fanatic public of Multan began to look down upon Shams Tabrez, so much so that hatching up a conspiracy against him, they

even stopped giving him any food.

According to another version, it is said that there was a certain Sadhu in Multan at that time who used to perform many miracles. One day, some of his disciples gave a show at the emperor's court in which men appeared in the form of lions, but this was not up to the liking of the emperor who said, "What nonsense is this ? Come as true lions."

The disciples came back to their master and told him everything. That Sadhu thereupon went to the king's court and did, in fact, change into a lion. The prince teased the lion which hit him with its paw, as a result of which he succumbed. The Sadhu, who was in the form of the lion, ran away. The emperor-captured the Sadhu's disciples and gave them the ultimatum that they must bring his son back to life, otherwise, they would lose their lives. The disciples exhorted their guru to confer life on the prince. But the Sadhu replied that he could not, as he did not possess that power. His disciples became very much upset at this. Ultimately, the Sadhu went to Shams Tabrez and prayed to him that he might graciously bring the prince to life as, otherwise, they would be beheaded. Shams Tabrez told him "You have done something very wrong ; anyway, let us go."

For the whole night, Shams Tabrez sitting by the prince's side, went on repeating "Get up by the Lord's command,.....get up by the Lord's command.....", but the boy would not get up. When it was dawn, Shams Tabrez said "Get up by my command." And the prince was instantly on his legs.

At this, the emperor, his courtiers and the Mulláhs (Mohammedan priests) said "This fellow is an infidel. He claims to be as great as and even greater than the Lord. He should be flayed alive. Shams Tabrez peeled off the skin from his body with his own hands. Partly, frightened at the sight of his body bereft of its outer skin and partly,

considering him to be an infidel, people everywhere started telling him, "Get away from here." Nobody would allow him to come near, nor would anyone give him anything to eat.

A certain person gave him some gram. He went to the gram-parcher, but, in the whole of Multan city, none agreed to parch his gram. Thereupon, looking towards the sun he said "I am Shams, you also are Shams (the sun), so come and parch my gram."

Hardly had he said this that the heat in Multan city began to increase. People felt as if the sun had come very near the earth. All the citizens were terribly upset because of the heat. And then the emperor and many others fell at his feet and begged of him to forgive them. The calamity was thus averted. Some time after, Shams Tabrez left his mortal coil. This happened in 1247 A. D. His mausoleum has been built in Multan city.

About his passing away, it is also said that once when he and Maulana Rum were sitting in a room, seven persons came with the intention of killing him and stood outside. One of them beckoned to him to come out of the room. He got up and, bidding Maulana Rum good-bye, told him that those people had come to kill him and he was going to meet them. As soon as he came out, those persons thrust knives into his body. He gave a loud cry, whereupon they all fell on the ground senseless. Maulana Rum came out of the room and found a few drops of blood on the ground but could not see his body. There was no knowing where the body had gone. About those seven persons it is said that they survived long, suffering a lot. Each of them died a horrible death, the body gradually decomposing and rotting away.

Shams Tabrez always used to remain in a state of intoxication. In this state of absorption, he would start singing :

What a fool Majnún was to have got lost in Lailá's love. When Laila left him, he wandered hither and thither upset and restless. How strange I, Shams Tabrez, am, to have been lost in love for my own self. When I looked within me, I saw no one else but the Lord. I saw the Lord and Lord alone within me.

Some couplets from Shams Tabrez's Ghazal are given below.

My abode is without a location and, as for any mark of distinction, I have none (that is, my region is above and beyond that of Kal and Maya and I have no form, shape or colour by which I can be described or distinguished). I am not the body, nor even life itself. He, who is the life of life, is my Beloved, and I am in Him. When I banish the feeling of duality from me, both the worlds appear to be one and the same to me and I then see only One, say only one thing, know only One and remember only One.

'Hú' (Om) is the beginning, and 'Hu' is the end. 'Hu' is manifest. 'Hu' is unmanifest, too. I know of none other than 'Hu' who is within me.

I am drunk and intoxicated by the wine of love. Both the worlds have now slipped away from my hands and I have no possession or belonging with me save love and destitution.

In my whole life, if I breathe even once without my Beloved, I shall be ashamed of my life that very moment.

If any day, the Lord is pleased to allow me to grasp His hand in seclusion, even for a moment, I shall bring both the worlds under my feet and, with the other hand, give them away without the slightest hesitation.

How strange a bird am I, flying, as I do, even while in the egg? In this body made of dust and water, I am all love and all spirituality.

O Shams Tabrez ! Do come to your senses. So intoxicated am I in this world that save intoxication and destitution, there is no other cure for me.

### (90) MAULÁNÁ RÚM

He was a famous Faqir of the 13th century who had attained a very high spiritual status. His name was Mohammed Jaláluddín alias Mauláná Rúm. His father's name was Shekh Baháuddín who belonged to Balakh and had no equal as a learned man of his time.

Maulana Rum was born in 604 Hijri (1207 A. D.). When he was only six years old, Khwájá Faríduddín Attár, on seeing him, told his father not to be negligent about this priceless jewel (Maulana Rum).

Maulana Rum got married at the age of eighteen. Some time after, a son was born to him who was given the name Sultán Valad.

Maulana Rum received his early education from his father. Amongst his father's pupils, there was one, Saiyad Burhánuddín, who was a philosopher and scholar. Maulana Rum was entrusted to his care. He used to study under Saiyad Burhanuddin who also taught him good manners. Maulana Rum's father died in 1230 A. D. Thereafter, he remained engaged in Saiyad Burhanuddin's Sewa. Maulana Rum was examined one day and when he was found to be fully qualified in Fiqqá (Mohammedan Theology), Hadís (narration relating to some saying or action of Mohammed) and Tafsír (interpretation of Quran), Saiyad Burhanuddin told him "You have now become an expert in all worldly and practical knowledge and the only thing that remains for you to acquire is spiritual knowledge, that is, the secret of the true Lord. This is a matter which your father entrusted me with and, accordingly, I am now going to impart that knowledge

to you.” And so, Maulana Rum remained with Saiyad Saheb for nine years more. At several places of his “Masnavi”, Maulana Rum has mentioned Saiyad Burhanuddin’s name with the respect of a disciple for his master.

Such was the reputation of Maulana Rum’s scholarship and high standard of morality that people used to come to him from distant places to study under him and seek his advice. There used to be a continuous flow of scholars, wealthy persons, highly respected people as well as students to his place.

Though it was all very well so far, yet, till now, Maulana Rum was dyed in the colour of temporal knowledge only. In fact, the first chapter of Maulana Rum’s spiritual life commenced when he came in contact with Shams Tabrez. It is rather strange that the books of history and other writings give different accounts of Maulana Rum’s meeting with Shams Tabrez though that is the most important event in the Maulana’s life. Consequently, it is not possible to be sure of the truth in this regard.

According to one account, Shams Tabrez’s Guru, Bába Kamáluddín Jandí, ordered him to proceed to Rúm and give solace and peace to one pining heart there. Shams Tabrez thereupon came to Koniya. One day Maulana Rum’s procession was proceeding with great pomp and splendour. Shams Tabrez, stopping the procession on the way, asked Maulana Rum, “What is meant by Mujáhidá (fighting against infidels in defence of the faith) and Riázat (penances and similar practices) ?” Maulana Rum replied, “It is to obey the command of the Shariyat.” Shams Tabrez retorted “That, of course, everybody knows.” Maulana Rum thereupon asked, “What can be of greater significance than this ?” Shams Tabrez replied, “The purpose of knowledge is to take you to the abode of your deity.” So saying, he recited the following couplet of Hakím Sanái.

Ignorance is better than the kind of knowledge which  
does not rid you of egotism and I-ness,

Hearing this from Shams Tabrez, Maulana Rum accepted him as his master.

The famous traveller, Ibn Batútá, saw Maulana Rum's mausoleum in Koniya and he has given the following account of the story popular those days among common people. One day, when Maulana Rum was teaching his students in the school, a certain sweet-meat seller who was selling Halwá (a kind of sweet-meat) came there. Maulana Rum took some Halwa from him and ate it. After taking the Halwa, the condition of Maulana Rum became such that he at once stood up and no one knows where he went thereafter. When he was seen again years after, he was found reciting couplets, with his disciples noting them down. The famous book "Masnaví" is a collection of those couplets.

Sipah Sálár, who spent several years performing Maulana Rum's Sewa, has given the following account of Maulana Rum's meeting with Shams Tabrez.

Once Shams Tabrez asked from the Lord the blessing that he might get a disciple who would be benefitted by associating with him. He had an inspiration within to proceed to Rúm. He at once started on his journey. Coming to Koniya, he halted at an inn there. In front of the inn, there was a Chabútrá\* where scholars as well as rich and respected people of the city used to assemble in the evening. Shams Tabrez, too, used to visit that Chabútrá. When Maulana Rum came to know of his arrival in the city, he proceeded to meet him there. On the way, people were touching Maulana's feet and he reached the door of the inn in a blaze of glory. Shams Tabrez realised that it was about this person that he had the hint from heaven. Eyes of the two wise men met. For forty days at a stretch, they remained engaged in Abhyas in seclusion. From that time, a drastic transformation started taking place in Maulana Rum.

Since Maulana Rum stopped imparting further instructions, delivering discourses and engaging in similar other

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\* A raised and levelled piece of ground to sit and converse on,

activities and remained wholeheartedly in attendance upon Shams Tabrez, not parting with his company even for a moment, a great stir soon came to prevail in the city and people thought that some mad person has cast a spell on him rendering him altogether useless. So great was the stir and sensation that even Maulana Rum's own disciples began to complain to him. Shams Tabrez thereupon quietly left for Damascus. Maulana Rum was so shaken and mortified by the separation from Shams Tabrez that he severed all connections with others and started living in seclusion. Long after Shams Tabrez's departure, people who had harassed him, felt very much ashamed and begged of Maulana Rum to forgive them. It was decided that all would go to Damascus in a body. Sultan Valad became the leader of the caravan. Maulana Rum wrote a letter and asked Sultan Valad that he should personally present it to Shams Tabrez.

Shams Tabrez came to Koniya again after many days and held Satsang there for a long time. A tent was pitched in front of Maulana Rum's house. Shams Tabrez used to stay and hold his sittings there. It so happened that whenever Alauddin Chalpi, the second son of Maulana Rum, would come to see Maulana, he would invariably pass through that tent. Shams Tabrez did not like this and though he pulled up Alauddin Chalpi several times, the latter would not refrain from his practice. This gave an opportunity to jealous persons. They started saying how outrageous it was that a stranger had come and he would not allow the person to whom the house really belonged to enter it. This kind of discussion grew as time passed. Shams Tabrez thereupon left once for all, never to return. Maulana Rum sent people in all directions in search for him. He himself made a search, but unable to get Shams Tabrez's whereabouts, returned to Koniya broken-hearted.

Other accounts of these very incidents are also found at some places. Some say that one of Maulana Rum's disciples had murdered Shams Tabrez. According to others, it was Maulana Rum's son, Chalpi, who had murdered him.

Be that as it may, the separation from Shams Tabrez came as a great shock to Maulana Rum who, for a long time, remained restless and dejected on that account.

A certain gold-beater called Saláh-uddín, who used to make thin films of gold and silver, became so profoundly influenced by Maulana Rum that, in no time, he gave away his shop with all it had. He became a close associate of Maulana Rum and constantly performed his Sewa for nine years. Maulana Rum also was particularly kind to him and, in his honour, composed Ghazals with great delight and pleasure.

Finding that Maulana Rum had made an illiterate gold-beater his intimate friend, people decided to create some trouble. But they gave up this idea when they realised that the relation between the two could never be broken.

Shekh Salah-uddin passed away in 1265 A. D. after four day's illness. Maulana Rum was very much aggrieved. He had Salah-Uddin buried near his father's grave.

After Salah-uddin's demise, Hisámuddín Chalpí was Maulana Rum's closest personal attendant. He had such great respect for Maulana Rum that he never washed his own hands or mouth in the Maulana's bathroom nor was he ever found doing any other thing of that kind. If necessary, he would go to his own house. It was on his prayer that Maulana Rum started composing "Masnavi."

A severe epidemic of Cholera broke out in Koniya in 1277 A. D. The epidemic raged for forty days. People, harassed and helpless, came to Maulana Rum wondering what a great calamity had befallen them. The Maulana told them that the earth was hungry ; it wanted mouthfuls and it would succeed.

A few days after, Maulana Rum fell ill. Reputed Hakíms (physicians) treated him. His pulse was erratic, sometimes beating in one way and, at other times, differently.

Ultimately, when the Hakims were unable to diagnose his disease, they requested him to himself tell them what he thought about the state of his health. But Maulana Rum paid no heed to their request. People thought that his end was near.

The whole city became upset on hearing of his illness. The most eminent Shekh Sadar-uddin, came to see him with his disciples. He became restless on seeing Maulana Rum's condition. He blest Maulana Rum that he might soon come round. The Maulana said, "May health be with you. Only one curtain now intervenes between the lover and the Beloved. Do you not want that that, too, is removed and light merges in light?" At this, the Shekh got up weeping. Maulana Rum recited the following couplet at that time.

Little do you know which emperor is seated within me.

Do not look at my handsome body. My feet are made of iron.

Citizens of all classes came to see him and went back weeping bitterly.

He left his mortal coil at sun-set on a Sunday which was the fifth day of Jamadi-ul-Sani in 676 Hijri (1277 A. D.). The shroud etc., were got ready during the night. The bier was taken in procession next morning. Men of all classes and all sections — young and old, wealthy and poor, learned and illiterate—were in the procession and all wept bitterly. Thousands tore their wearing apparels to shreds. The king was also there. Even Christians and Jews were in the procession. The king asked them "What have you to do with Maulana Rum?" They replied "If he was Mohammed to you, he was Christ and Músá to us."

The coffin in which the body was encased was changed several times on the way. People had its planks distributed among themselves like Prashad.

The procession with the bier reached the grave-yard

by evening. Shekh Sadaruddin stood up to conduct the funeral service but, overwhelmed with grief, became senseless. Ultimately, the service was conducted by Kaji Sirajuddin.

Ibn Batuta has written in his account on Koniya that there is a big Langar-Kháná (alms-house) at Maulana Rum's mausoleum where visitors and travellers can get food.

In the account of his travels, Ibn Batuta has also written that Maulana Rum's line of succession still continues. Persons belonging to his sect are called Jaláliyá as his surname was Jaláluddín. But these days, the followers of this sect are called Maulviyá in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, and Constantinople.

Sháh Bú Ali Kalandar Pánípatí was in Maulana Rum's company for a long time. Shekh Sádí's Guru, Shahábuddín Saharvardí, also associated with the Maulana. From Shekh Sadi's account of his journey to Rum which he undertook with a view to meeting a certain Darvesh it appears that he also might have met Maulana Rum. This is confirmed by many stories.

Allámá Kutubuddin Shírazí, who has written a very learned treatise on philosophy, once came to Maulana Rum with a view to testing him. The Maulana related a story which gave a hint that the Maulana knew that he had come to test him. On hearing the story, Kutubuddin Shirazi left ashamed.

Maulana Rum never used to have any bedding or pillows. He would never lie down. If he felt sleepy, he would sleep sitting. Quite often, he would not take any food for ten to twenty days at a stretch. By nature, he was very contented. High officials of the Sultanate as well as nobles and courtiers used to send him all kinds of presents but he would not keep any of them with him. He would at once pass on to Saláh-uddín, the goldbeater, and Chalpi

Hisamuddin anything which would come to him as a present. If only a scarcity was felt in the house-hold at any time or if hard pressed by his son, Sultan Valad, he would keep something for himself. If on any day, there would be nothing to eat at home, he would be extremely happy and would say that in his house, that day, he could smell Darveshi (the atmosphere befitting true Darveshes). He used to keep a myrobalam in his mouth all the time. When people asked Chalpi what the reason was, he replied that the Maulana did not even want that there should be a sweet taste in his mouth. When anybody came to him asking for something he would at once put off any shirt or cloak-like gown, which he would be wearing at that time, and give it away to the visitor. For this reason, his shirt or gown would be unbuttoned at the front so that he could take it off in no time.

In spite of the great honour and respect he used to command, he was gentle, polite and humble and he always maintained an attitude of service. He was ever ready to please anybody, no matter if that would cause some pain or suffering to his own self.

Once when he was passing through the market, the boys, on seeing him, came forward to kiss his hands. He halted and kept standing. Boys came from all directions, and after kissing his hands, left. One of the boys said to him "Maulana ! Please wait a little, I shall just finish such and such work and then come to you". And the Maulana did keep standing on that very spot till the boy came.

Once there was a recital of hymns at an assembly of devotees and Darveshes. The Maulana himself as well as others were in a highly withdrawn state. A condition of extreme self-absorption had overtaken all. A certain person, who had lost control over his senses, while in that state of withdrawal, was bumping against the Maulana. This happened several times. Some persons removed him from his seat near the Maulana. Displeased, the Maulana said

“Wine this fellow has drunk, but mischief you people are engaged in.”

There was a hot spring in Koniya. Maulana Rum used to go often there for taking bath. One day he thought of going there. One of his disciples had gone first and made arrangements for his bath at a certain spot, but before the Maulana had reached the place, some lepers came and started bathing at the same spot. When the Maulana came, his disciples wanted to drive away the lepers from that place. The Maulana took his disciples to task and had his bath on the same spot where the lepers had taken their bath.

Once there was a congregation of devotees at somebody's place, where hymns were being sung. Some lady had sent two plates of sweet-meats. Everybody there was in a highly withdrawn state, and lost in bliss and emotion. In the mean time, a dog came and took some sweets from the plates. Those assembled there wanted to belabour the dog. The Maulana said “The dog was more hungry than you. He ate the sweets because they were his share.”

Once he entered a public hot-bath but came out at once. When people asked him the reason, he replied “A certain person was already taking his bath there and the caretakers wanted to drive him away for my sake.”

Once Maulana Rum's wife had given some punishment to her maid-servant. By chance, he came home at that very time. Very much displeased, he told his wife “What would have been your condition, had the maid-servant been the master and you the maid-servant? All are, in fact, our brothers and sisters and all of us are the Lord's slaves. Here, none is anybody's slave.”

Once while two persons were quarrelling, Maulana Rum chanced to pass that way. One of them said to the other “If you hurl one abuse on me, I shall pay you back with ten abuses.” The Maulana said “Brother ! whatever abuse you want to hurl, do hurl on me. Even if you hurl a

thousand harsh words, you will not hear even one from me.” Hearing the Maulana, both the persons felt very much ashamed and fell at his feet.

Maulana Rum used to say, “The more my fame is spread, the more am I getting engrossed in a calamity. But what can I do, there seems to be no way out.” He has mentioned this aspect in his “Masnavi.”

He had an utter dislike for loafers and shirkers.

Once some rich person submitted to him “I come to you less frequently because of preoccupation with other things.” He replied “I would be more happy if you did not come at all.”

Maulana Rum used to remain withdrawn in a state of extreme self-absorption and elation all the time. He would suddenly stand up while sitting quietly and start dancing. At times, he would slip away unnoticed and would not come back for weeks. His disciples would go out in search of him and often find him in a forest, from where, they would bring him back.

While walking in streets, he would suddenly stop and start dancing like one drunk. In his state of intoxication, he would take out whatever he would be having on his person then, and give it away to the singers. For this reason, one of his disciples, who was a rich man, used to always keep a chestful of dresses handy, so that he could be made to put on another dress instantly.

One day his son, Sultan Valad, complained “All the Sufis live together quite peacefully, whereas, those belonging to our circle fight and quarrel over useless issues.” The Maulana thereupon said “Yes, a thousand hens can live at one and the same place, but not two cocks.”

## SAYINGS OF THE MAULANA

There was a collection of letters, called “Fiámáfíá”, written by him off and on to Muinuddin Parváná. It is not available now.

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**D Í V Á N (MAULANA'S WRITINGS)**


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It contains fifty thousand couplets, but they are all Ghazals. Shams Tabrez's name has been mentioned in the last line of each Ghazal. Misled by this, people call it Shams Tabrez's 'Divan'. But this is not true. Maulana Rum has mentioned Shams Tabrez's name in a spirit of dedication. Some also say that Maulana Rum has written this 'Divan' in the name of Shams Tabrez.

Often Maulana Rum's Ghazals have been written in a particular mood. They deal with one and the same kind of emotive condition. Unlike other Ghazals, there is no variation in the mood in succeeding couplets. As an example, one particular mood or condition was that, quite often, he would keep awake night after night in a state of exuberance and intoxication.

The ecstasy, fervour and self-abnegation which mark Maulana Rum's poetical compositions are not found in other's writings. Exuberance and fervour were already embedded in his nature. They were further intensified in Shams Tabrez's company. On reading Maulana Rum's compositions, one finds that the author (poet), lost in the intoxication, love and bliss, goes on uttering whatever comes to his mouth spontaneously. So beautifully has he described the various conditions which pass over a lover that the reader finds a picture, as it were, of those conditions being drawn before his eyes.

**MASNAVI**

It is this book which has made Maulana Rum immortal. It consists of 26660 couplets and has been divided into six chapters.

When Hisámuddin Chalpi submitted to Maulana Rum that he might be pleased to write a Masnavi,\* the Maulana said that the idea also occurred to him the previous night and the Maulana recited the following couplet :

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\* Poetry consisting of distichs corresponding in measure.

Listen, what this reed is telling about. It is narrating a tale of the misfortunes it has been suffering ever since it was chopped off from the reed-bed. The weeping and moaning of men and women are an expression of its agony. It wishes its heart may burst open so that it may give full vent to the pangs of its separation.

When the first chapter of "Masnavi" was over, Hisamuddin Chalpi's wife passed away. Chalpi was so shaken by this bereavement that for full two years he remained extremely sad and restless. For this reason, the writing of Masnavi remained suspended for those two years. When Chalpi regained his calm, the Maulana, resumed writing "Masnavi."

When the sixth chapter was about to be completed, the Maulana fell ill and the writing was discontinued. When his son Bahá-uddín Valad wanted to know the reason, the Maulana said that it was now the last lap of the journey. The secret would now be given out by somebody else. The story current amongst the general public is that the Maulana left his mortal coil soon after, and the sixth chapter remained incomplete. But the fact really was that the Maulana regained his health and completed the sixth chapter.

The Maulana was a Sadh of a very high order. His poetical compositions relate to very high planes and are replete with matters of spiritual realisation and the secrets of true Parmarth and the Lord. However, there are hundreds, rather, thousands of couplets which are surpassingly charming from the literary point of view.

Said the Khalífá to Lailá "Are you the one for whom Majnún is wandering so distracted and restless? You are no better than any other woman." "Keep quiet", answered Laila, "You are not Majnun."

Shekh Sádí, too, has dealt with the same subject very nicely in his "Gulistán", Indeed, his expression "Laila has

to be seen with the eyes of Majnun” has become a very popular saying. Nevertheless, Maulana Rum’s style and diction and his delightful rhyming are superior to Shekh Sadi’s. Shekh Sadi has put the question to Majnun, while the Maulana, by putting a question to Laila, has produced a particularly pleasing effect. Secondly, the same sentiment which Shekh Sadi has sought to express in a long sentence has been conveyed by Maulana in just two words, “Majnun Nesti, i. e. you are not Majnun.”

Some of Maulana Rum’s sayings are quoted below.

(1-3)

Death makes fools of Hakíms (physicians) and shows the opposite or adverse effect of medicine. Syrup and honey cause the patient’s temperature to rise and oil of almond increases his dryness. Pergative herbs make his constipation more obstinate instead of facilitating his motions. On giving him water to drink, the fire within him rages all the more.

(4)

Implant in your heart the words of a Sant. Do not turn your face away from Him. Relish His words, soft or harsh ; they will strengthen your faith.

(5)

Whether He speaks hot or cold, receive His words with joy, thereby you will escape from the hell-fire.

(6)

Your understanding is very poor. Seek a perfect Sat Guru in the world.

(7)

If you get a particle of true knowledge in His company, you will be able to subdue the devilish mind,

(8)

A perfect Guru is like a musk-bag ; externally, He is blood, like all other human beings, while within Him, is the fragrance of musk.

(9)

When He discloses the secrets and mysteries of 'Ghat' (human microcosm), your Surat and mind will rush in rapture towards Nabh (high heaven).

(10)

But to seek Hari (God) in stone (idol) will be as futile as a blind man's looking into a mirror.

(11)

Do not proceed within without Guru because this journey is full of woe and danger.

(12)

Come, therefore, under the protection of Sat Guru ; the object will not be achieved through a false Guru.

(13)

A few hour's company of Guru is better than a hundred year's worship.

(14)

A perfect Guru is all powerful. He turns back the arrow of Karam.

(15)

A perfect Guru hears the Shabd (Word) of the Supreme Being. Take His words to be true.

(16)

If you are a traveller of the inner path, seek a perfect

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Guide, whether He is a Hindú or a Musalmán, an Arab or a Turk.

(17)

Do not look at His figure or colour, look at His purpose and intention, love and faith.

(18)

True lovers of the Supreme Being are friendly to both Hindus and Mohammedans. On the other hand, two Hindus will not be friends, if they indulge in the activities of the mind.

(19)

Listen, O brother ! The Lord, who is all-pervading like the sun, veils Himself in the human body when He incarnates as Sant Sat Guru.

(20)

The laughing pomegranate makes the garden laughing (gay and blooming). Companionship with the Perfect, makes you perfect.

(21)

The Sewak (servant) of the perfect Guru is superior to all. It is nothing if he exercises authority over rulers and kings.

(22)

Examine the exalted status of Guru internally. Do not believe in His eminence without perceiving it.

(23)

He in whom dwells the light divine, is worshipped by gods and the virgins of the paradise,

(24)

Behold the eyes and the fore-head of the Sadh. In Him dwells the refulgence and light of Sat (i. e., Sat Purush). Those who have, in their hearts, Gyan (knowledge) of the status of Guru, can recognize Him by those marks.

(25)

Guru is the Supreme Being. His Shabd is resounding without the help of tongue.

(26)

He is the physician and He is the teacher. Keep on performing the Abhyas of listening to His Nád (Shabd) internally.

(27)

Give up bad company. Seek a true companion.

(28)

Whoever associates with Sat Guru, imbibes the colour (love) of Sat Purush.

(29)

He who associates with a false guru, goes to hell and suffers terrible agonies.

(30)

Great is the status and position of a Sant. Whoever sacrifices his body and mind, will know Him.

There is a couplet by the Maulana which is as follows:

Haft-do haftád qálib deedá am  
Ham cho sabzá bárahá royeedá am.

Two times seven, seven times ten was I born  
as in vegetation grow grass and corn.

Haft=seven. Haft-do=twice seven, i. e., fourteen. Haftad=seventy. Haft do haftad= Twice seven and seventy, i. e., "Chaurási" or eightyfour. Just as grass grows, so have I gone round the cycle of eightyfour a number of times.

Mullás and Maulvís could not understand what this wretched "Chaurási" is. Accordingly, in place of "Haft-do-haftad", they have substituted "Haft-sad-haftád." "Sad" means hundred. Haft-sad-Haftád would, therefore, mean seven hundred seventy which is a meaningless number, having no relevance. In all books containing Maulana Rum's poetical compositions which are now available, one finds the expression "Haft sad haftád". One can check if some handwritten manuscript of those days is available. It is almost certain that there one will find "Haft do haftád." "Haft sad haftád" carries no sense.

In Masnavi, there are hundreds of stories, references to history, banters, questions and answers, as well as examples of ready wit, all presented in a manner and style such that a great effect is produced on one who reads or listens to them. The most subtle and profound matters concerning morality, worldly conduct, way of living as well as the secrets of Parmarth and high regions have been dealt with in such a manner that they not only appeal to our intellect but also sink deep into our hearts. The method which the Maulana has preferred and adopted is such that those who cannot study dry and prosaic articles may be attracted towards his writings by fables and stories and witticism.

The Maulana has highlighted in the form of tales and stories the evil tendencies which lurk within man's mind and act as obstacles in the way of his practising true Parmarth, deviating and leading him astray from the right path. So convincingly has the Maulana dealt with the fraud and deceptions of the devilish mind that on a perusal of his tales and stories the reader is automatically led to believe that it is

his own case which the Maulana is describing. One particular story is being quoted below as an example.

A certain grocer had a nice looking parrot which could imitate many sounds and voices. It also used to keep a watch on the grocer's shop and would entertain customers with its mimicry. One day the grocer had gone somewhere and the parrot was keeping a vigil on his shop. By chance, a cat sneaked into the shop and pounced upon a rat. The parrot ran for its own life. In the resulting tumult, bottles containing oil of almond got toppled and the oil started flowing all over the floor. When the grocer came back, he became very angry on seeing what had happened and, in that fit of temper, he hit the parrot on the head so hard that it became bald. From that very moment, the parrot started keeping absolutely mum and stopped saying pleasant things. The grocer repented for his action, wondering if the parrot would ever talk again.

A long time after, a certain Faqir one day came that way. The crown of his head was polished and shining like an inverted cup. Seeing him, the parrot at once broke forth "O Faqir ! It seems you, too, overturned bottles of oil of almond and that is why you have become bald." On hearing it, those nearby could not help bursting into a peel of laughter and remarking "How funny ! This parrot thinks that the Faqir, too, is one like him."

The moral which this story seeks to impart is that one should not try to judge the Lord's devotees by comparing their condition and ways with those of one's own, for, if one tries to do so, there is a likelihood of one's making the same kind of mistake as the parrot did. Indeed, people have quite often failed to recognize Sants, Sadhs, Mahatmas and devotees, and consequently, remained misled.

In Urdu script, the words 'Sher' (lion) and 'Shir' (milk) are written in the same manner, though they are poles asunder in their meanings. The hornet and the bee both

collect juice from flowers. But while one of them stings, the other makes honey. Two deers drink water from the same place but while one gives musk, the other ejects dung. Two bamboo-trees grow at the same place, but we get bamboo-manna from one of them, and not from the other. Lakhs of such examples can be given. Speaking of devotees, it would not be right to say, "You are a human being, which I, too, am ; you eat, drink and, sleep, which I, too, do." If an ordinary human being eats, filth is produced, but if a devotee takes food, divine light emanates from him. The place where a devotee stays is sanctified. All other places are unholy and evil. All actions of a devotee, are done under the Lord's command. What a man does is base imitation and is prompted by desire and craving.

### (91) B Ū A L Í K A L A N D A R

His father's name was Shekh Fakhruddin Sálár Iráqí. He was, however, born in Pánípat. His mother's name was Bibí Háfizá. He was inclined towards Faqiri and Sufism.

Shekh Fakhruddin's eldest son, Shekh Nízámuddín, came to India on a business tour at a young age. He felt the atmosphere of Multán so congenial to him that he settled down there. Unable to bear the pangs of separation from his son, Shekh Fakhruddin came with his wife to Panipat and it was here that his second son, Hazrat Shekh Sharafuddín Bú Alí Kalandar, the lover of God, was born.

It is said that when Bu Ali Kalandar was born, he was crying all the time and would not take milk nor open his eyes. Full three days passed in this manner. On the fourth day, a wandering Faqir, who had some animal's skin on, called at the door and said that he wanted to see the child who had been born in the family three days back. The Faqir was thereupon taken inside and the child was shown to him. He placed his hand on the child's head and whispered some words into his ear. The child stopped crying that very moment, and the Faqir, too, disappeared.

Hazrat Shekh Sharfuddin Bu Ali Kalandar spent the first forty years of his life in acquiring worldly knowledge. One can realize from this how interested he was in his studies. He used to stay in old Delhi. Sometime after, when fed up with worldly knowledge, he threw all his books into the Yamuna river and went to the forest where he would remain lost day and night in spiritual practices.

Sultán Gayásuddín Mohammed Sháh of Delhi very much wanted to have a son. But by the Lord's dispensation, only daughters were being born to him and he had taken the vow that if he had any more daughter, he would kill her. In this way, he had killed many daughters. By chance, one of his queens again gave birth to a daughter. The queen hid the child in an earthen vessel and had her taken to a forest on the bank of the river and, by putting up some excuse, saved herself from the wrath of the emperor.

The earthen vessel containing the child caught the eyes of a washerman on the river bank. He was issueless. Thanking the Lord, he took the child home, and both husband and wife started bringing her up like their own daughter. The girl, in due course, attained puberty. She started going with the washerman and his wife to the river bank. One day the emperor came there a-hunting and he fell deeply in love with the girl.

A few days after, marriage between the emperor and the girl took place. At night, as soon as the emperor wanted to have sexual intercourse with the girl, she would have menstrual discharges. He tried several times, but each time, the girl would have those discharges. Finally, he consulted Hakíms (physicians) and astrologers to find out what the reason could be. They moved heaven and earth with their calculations but found out blessed nothing. Highly displeased, the emperor sent them all to prison.

Being disappointed from all quarters, the emperor finally went to Hazrat Sharafuddin Kalandar and told him everything. Hazrat Sharafuddin said that he would give his

opinion next day. When the emperor came to him again, he said "The girl with whom you want to share bed is not your bride but daughter. By the Lord's miracle, she starts having menstrual discharges at the right time and the great good purpose of that miracle is that you may be saved from committing sin. Go and enquire from your such and such queen about the matter." The emperor, on enquiry, found that all that had been said was true. Very much ashamed, he said 'Tobá' and begged that he might be pardoned for the sin of killing his daughters. Hazrat Kalandar blest him and granted him mercy. The merciful Lord blest the emperor with four sons.

Many such miracles were performed by Hazrat Kalandar. It is not necessary to write about all of them. It is said that he lived up to an age of 122 years. He left his mortal coil in 1324 A. D. in village Búdhá-kherá situated at a distance of four miles from Karnál. He was alone at the time he passed away. None else was near him. On the third day after his demise when some persons came to have his Darshan, the sad sight came to their notice and they passed the information to the people of Karnal who took the body to Karnal and made preparations for its burial.

In Panipat, there was an old Sufi whose name was Maulana Sirajuddin Makkí. In a dream he was told by Hazrat Kalandar "Get up quickly, Maulana ! I have departed from this world and want to lie in Panipat. Free me from the clutches of the people of Karnal." Inhabitants of Panipat in a body reached the burial ground when the dead body was being bathed. The people of Karnal refused to part with the body. After much altercation and fuss, it was decided that the dead body itself might be asked as to what should be done. At night, people of both the parties entrenched themselves near the body and started performing 'Jap' (repetition of the Lord's name). A voice said "I have remained in Karnal as well as Panipat for a long time and I shall continue to do so. I am here as well as there and, in fact, everywhere, but I want to rest in Panipat." The Karnal

people would not agree in spite of this. Ultimately, Maulana Sirajuddin Makki said "All right ; you lift the body and take it away from here." When they tried to do that, the body could not be moved at all. But when the Panipat people lifted the bier, it appeared to be lighter than a flower. Very much ashamed, the Karnal people then gave the permission to take the body away. Hazrat Kalandar was finally buried in Panipat.

Some selected couplets from his 'Masnavi' are given below.

Listen O Sadh, I tell you the way of Bhakti (devotion).  
Desire nothing from the rich. (1)

How can the secrets of the Supreme Being be revealed  
to those, and how can they be redeemed whose minds  
are full of the desires for sensual pleasures ? (2)

Your mind is full of hundreds of desires. How can  
the light of the Lord shine on it ? (3)

You want the world and also the Darshan of the Lord.  
This is difficult. You are ignorant. (4)

If the veil be removed from your eyes, you will feel  
sick of and disgusted with the world. (5)

When the deceptions of the world are revealed to you,  
you will run far far away from it. (6)

If you earn your bread by honest means, you will be  
able to apply yourself to Bhajan (spiritual practices)  
without difficulty. (7)

If you earn your living by right and legitimate means,  
you will be able to subdue your mind, O excellent  
one ! (8)

Cast away from your mind everything except Guru.  
The Beloved will then take His seat in your heart. (9)

So long as there is egoism in your mind, the Lord cannot make friends with you. (10)

When egoism disappears from your mind, you will get to the Lord and enjoy His bliss. (11)

Sacrifice yourself at the Feet of the Lord. The Merciful Lord existed when you were non-existent. Secrets of the Lord are revealed to one who has detached himself from the ties of body and mind. (12)

Close your eyes, ears and mouth and you will perceive the resplendence of the Lord. (13)

The desire for the world blackens the mind. Beg of Guru the Guru Himself. Do not entertain any other desire. (14)

The Lord loves you far more than what you love Him. But you fail to perceive it. You do not know how He showers His grace and mercy on you. (15)

## (92) FARÍDUDDÍN GANJ SHAKAR

His full name, including his wellknown title, is Shekh\* Kabír Hazrat\* Bába\* Faríduddín Masúd Ganj Shakar Chishtí. He was born at a place called Khotvál near Multán. He had his early education in Multan itself. Once the famous Shekh Hazrat Khwájá\*\* Kutubuddín Bakhtiár Kákí of Delhi visited Multan. Hazrat Baba had in his hand a book having the title 'Náfá'. Hazrat Khwaja asked, "What book is this?" Hazrat Baba replied "Náfá", whereupon Hazrat Khwaja said, "It will do you Náfá (good)."

When Hazrat Khwaja was about to return to Delhi, Hazrat Baba, too, wanted to accompany him, but Hazrat Khwaja said "First acquire temporal knowledge and then come to me, for, the Satan makes a fool of the Faqir who is

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\* Titles of respect applied to venerable old men.

\*\* A reputed saint, skilled in divination.

illiterate and uneducated.” So, Hazrat Baba spent five years in studies, after which, he travelled far and wide, and had the benefit of the Darshan and Satsang of many famous Mahatmas of his time. He also met Shekh Fariduddin Attár Nishápurí.

Returning from his travels, Hazrat Baba went straight to Khwaja Kutubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki in Delhi and remained engaged in his Sewa. Hazrat Kutub Saheb asked Hazrat Baba to apply himself to Jap (repetition of Nam), Tap (penances) and other spiritual practices. Hazrat Baba used to fast for seven days at a stretch. There was a well in the compound of a mosque in a lonely forest, and he performed hard penance while hanging inside that well. The whole day, he would remain engaged in Dhyán and, at night, the Mulláh of the mosque would lower him down into the well tying his legs by one end of a rope, the other end of which he would fasten to a tree nearby. Because of this kind of Jap, Tap, etc. extending over a long period, he became so weak physically that when Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti of Ajmer visited Hazrat Kutub Saheb in Delhi, he could not keep standing as a mark of respect to the august visitor, and fell down as soon as he stood up. Both Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti and Hazrat Kutubuddin felt pity on him. They were pleased to grant him the treasure of Parmarth and initiate him.

Hazrat Baba was married to Sultan Balban's daughter, Hazbará Bánú. The Sultan gave lakhs of rupees in dowry. As a result of associating with Hazrat Baba only for a short time, his wife too gave up all the ease and comfort of the world and, taking to the life of a Faqir, engaged in spiritual practices. The princess gave away with utter abandon all her wealth and property in the service of the Lord. When the Sultan came to know of this, he again gave her the same amount of wealth. When this happened for the third time, the princess told her husband, “Though I, on my part, have put on the garb of a Darvesh, my father, who is a Sultan, cannot reconcile himself to this fact. He will continue to burden

me with wealth like this all the time. Hence I pray that we go to Ajodhan (now known as Pákpátan, a wellknown place in the district of Montgomery in Punjab) and apply ourselves to spiritual practices there. So, this is what happened and they started staying in Ajodhan quite happily. Hazrat Baba lived for ninetyfive years.

Hazrat Baba's mother was a good and understanding lady. To inculcate in him the habit of saying Namaz prayers from his very childhood, she hit upon the plan of keeping packets of sugar daily under the cloth spread for saying Namaz on, and would tell the children that whoever amongst them would offer Namaz prayers would get sugar from under that cloth. The effect of this was that Hazrat Baba, from his very childhood, became a firm Namází (one saying Namaz prayers regularly), and it was because of the Shakar or sugar mentioned above that he came to be known as Ganj Shakar. (Ganj meaning treasure, and Shakar meaning sugar).

Once the shirt which Hazrat Baba was wearing was worn out and had some patches on it. Somebody brought a new shirt for him. He put it on but, the next moment, took it off saying, "I missed in this new shirt the ease and comfort I was enjoying in the old and tattered one I had on me."

A certain Faqir once came and said in a harsh and severe tone, "What is this method of self-glorification that you have devised? You are getting yourself worshipped by people." Quite calmly and rather casually, Hazrat Baba replied "No human being has the capacity to attain that position by his own efforts. Whatever is being done is done by the Lord Himself." This plain and simple reply rendered the Faqir non-plussed and made him fall at the Hazrat Baba's feet in a spirit of perfect devotion.

Hazrat Baba could tell of hidden things by observing conditions outside. A certain person of Pákpátan, who was being oppressed by an official, came to Hazrat Baba and complained to him. Hazrat Baba called the official and spoke to him about that person. But the latter again came to

Hazrat Baba and submitted that the said official had not still given up oppressing him. Hazrat Baba said "I spoke to the official about you but he is not paying any heed to my words. It appears that you, too, are oppressing somebody. You should say Tobá to that. The Lord will then soften your oppressor's attitude towards you." That person admitted afterwards that he then remembered an act of tyranny of his own to which he said Tobá, and, in no time, that official became very kindly disposed towards him.

Sultan Nasíruddín sent to Hazrat Baba some cash and a deed by which he had made a gift of four villages to him. Hazrat Baba gave away the cash in charity that very moment and returned the deed with the observation that Faqirs have nothing to do with such a thing.

Once while recommending the case of a certain person to Sultan Gayásuddín Balban, Hazrat Baba wrote "I have already put up my prayer before the Lord for the person whose case I am recommending to you. If you do what he wants, it is, indeed, the Lord who will do it, but you will get the thanks. If you cannot do it, then, obviously, it is not the pleasure of the Lord to have it done, and so, you will not to be blamed as you cannot help it."

#### HAZRAT BABA HAS SAID :

"Present yourself in your true colours before others, as otherwise, the truth will come out by itself."

"If you are in the company of wealthy persons, do not forget the Lord. If you have money, you need not be sorry. If you have no money, do not be sorry even then. Make such efforts that you become spiritually alive before you die."

"Even Humá\* one day comes to be caught in the net of a person who gives grains to birds. In other words, one starts making substantial progress from small and

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\* A fabulous bird about which it is said that on whomsoever it casts its shadow, he becomes a king.

humble beginnings. If a person persists in his humble efforts, he will achieve his object one day."

"Granted that you say Namaz prayers the whole night and, all through the day, attend to sick persons, nevertheless, so long as you do not rid your mind of anger and animosity, what you are doing will amount to your throwing away a hundred rose-beds to a thorn, that is, you will be holding fast to a mere thorn and allow heaps of roses to be wasted."

"He, who is caught in the snare of external names and sounds and gets engrossed in them, shall remain outside the door of the Lord's Darbar. He cannot enter the Lord's Court (Darbar)."

"However friendly your one time enemy, may become with you, do not be complacent about him, but regard him as friend-cum-devil."

"Remain afraid of him who is afraid of you."

Hazrat Baba used to shower his gifts and bounty equally on all. But if some, due to bad luck, remained deprived of them, they would murmur and complain. A certain Darvesh, Mullá Yusuf, who had been engaged in his Sewa for a long time, found that people were coming to him and were soon going back after becoming perfect. He thought that the fact that he had achieved precious little till then was due to Hazrat Baba's not giving any attention to him. Ultimately, he one day broke forth saying "Maulana Nizamuddin from Delhi came and was enriched with the treasure of Parmarth\* within a few days. Others, too, achieved their object in no time and then went back to their respective places. How is it that I remain deprived?" Hazrat Baba replied "This is due to your own ill-luck. To me, all are the same. I am not miserly towards anybody." Mulla Yusuf felt some doubt when he heard this. A heap of bricks was lying there. Hazrat Baba called a little and

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\* Welfare of soul.

innocent child and said to him, "Bring one brick for me." He brought a nice, undamaged brick and gave it to Hazrat Baba, who then ordered, "All right, now go and bring one brick for Maulana Nizamuddin of Delhi." The child thereupon brought one nice brick for him, too. Hazrat Baba again ordered him, "Now get one brick for Mulla Yusuf." The child this time brought a broken piece of brick. Hazrat Baba broke forth saying, "Now, you see Mualla ! Is it due to any meanness on my part ?"

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### (93) NIZÁMUDDÍN AULIYÁ

In the time of Sultan Shamsuddin Altamash, some descendants of Mohammed came from Bukhára to Badáún and settled down there. To one of them, a boy was born in 1238 A. D. who was given the name of Saiyad Mohammed. He was the same promising lad who later on came to be remembered as Khwájá Nizámuddín Auliya, the lover of God. He stayed in Badáún up to the age of fiftyfive. His father Saiyad Ahmed Saheb, was a very wise man and the judge of Badaun. Khwaja Saheb became an orphan at the age of five. He came with his mother to Delhi where they used to lead a life of extreme destitution. They would fast every second or third day and lived in a shack. Khwaja Nizamuddin Saheb had his education here and he also became a disciple of Hazrat Baba Fariduddin Ganj Shakar. Baba Saheb gave him the blessing that he would never depend on anybody but at the same time told him that he must make it a point to repay any loan he might have taken from someone.

One day, when Khwaja Nizamuddin Saheb had been without any food for several days, a certain Faqir came and started eating the hot food meant for Khwaja Saheb straight from the earthen pot in which it had been cooked and, after he had finished eating, he broke the earthen pot and disappeared saying, "You received the internal treasures from Baba Farid, and I have broken your fast." From that very day, Khwaja Nizamuddin Saheb's state of destitution ended.

Many rich persons became his disciples. Such large quantities of food used to be prepared in his Langar-kháná (alms-house) that several quintals of salt itself would be used up. It was only after all the travellers and guests had finished eating that he would ask for his food which used to be very ordinary and would consist of no other items save bread and boiled fruits of the Karil. He used to avoid nice dishes.

When Sultan Alauddin Khilji invited him, he would neither himself go to the Sultan nor would he allow the Sultan to come to him. But this did not affect the Sultan's faith in him. Chengiz Khan's men surrounded Delhi at an opportune moment when the Sultan's soldiers were out of the city. It was by Khwaja Nizamuddin Saheb's grace that a scare was automatically created in the camps of the enemy's soldiers and they ran away during the night itself.

Such was the end of Sultan Gayásuddín that though he, on his part, wanted to drive away Khwaja Nizamuddin from Gayáspurá, it so happened that his own new palace collapsed and all opposed to Khwaja Saheb, including the emperor, were buried under the debris and perished. The story goes like this. Displeased with Khwaja Nizamuddin Sultan Gayasuddin had sent word to him from Bengal that he should vacate the city and go somewhere else before the Sultan reached Delhi. It is said that on receiving this message, Khwaja Saheb had observed before his disciples "Delhi is still far far away." His prediction came to be true. The Sultan's eldest son, Mohammed Tughlak, who was Khwaja Saheb's disciple, had left that palace just before it tumbled down and was thus saved from sure death.

Khwaja Nizamuddin Saheb left his mortal coil at the age of ninety-four. His mausoleum has been built in Delhi. His Urs is celebrated every year with great pomp and grandeur.

A monthly magazine in Urdu has narrated the following account :

"It is said that long ago, about six or seven hundred years back, a very rich and eminent traveller came and stopped in a certain inn. He had with him maid-servants, servants, money and gems, and costly things, indeed, everything. By chance, at that very time another traveller, who was poor and in a miserable plight, stopped at the same inn on his way back from Delhi. The wealthy traveller came forward and asked him, "From where are you coming?" The reply was "From Delhi." At the mention of Delhi, the wealthy traveller, with great zeal and enthusiasm, asked, "There is a Darvesh called Khwaja Nizamuddin in that city. Did you have a chance to meet him?" The poor traveller replied "No question of a chance. I myself went to see him. I am a poor man and thought I would get something there. As my ill luck would have it, the master had nothing with him then other than a pair of shoes used by him and, he gave them to me. I am taking those shoes with me." The listener, beside himself with love and emotion, said "In the name of the Lord I do beseech you that you hand over those shoes to me and, in return, all that I have is yours." The poor man was astounded to find that he was being offered things worth lakhs in exchange of just that pair of shoes. He wondered if the rich man was joking with him because of his destitution. The rich man, on his part, was neither in his senses nor had he then the capacity to cut jokes. The writer says that this transaction fetched four to five lakhs of rupees to the poor man. The rich man touched those shoes with his eyes, placed them on his head and then, putting them inside the folds of his turban, stood up ready to start for Delhi in a state of bliss and ecstasy."

The person to whom those shoes belonged was none other than the great soul whom mankind call as the lover of the Lord, viz., Khwaza Nizamuddin Auliya and the Amir (the rich and noble man), referred to, was the same Amír Khusro the eminent poet — heaven alone knows for how many generations has whose following couplet been imparting glamour and warmth to the congregations of lovers and devotees since then,

Very dear — nay, priceless is the wealth or capital of union with the Beloved. What does it matter if one has to lay down one's life in exchange for that merchandise!

#### (94) H Á F I Z

Háfiz was his nom-de-plume. His real name was Mohammed, and Shams-uddin was his title. His forefathers belonged to a place called Sarkán in Írán, near the city Nihávand. His grand-father shifted from there to Shíráz. His father's name was Mauláná Kamáluddín.

Khwaja Shams-uddin Mohammed Hafiz Shirazi was born in Shíráz in 715 Hijri, i. e., 1315 A. D. Being born in a family of intellectuals, he had to take to studies quite seriously from his very boyhood. He first committed the Quran to memory and, from that very time, he started being called Hafiz. He found this title so much to his liking that he later on assumed it as his non-de-plume.

After committing Quran to memory, Hafiz studied Tafsír (annotation on Quran) and Fikká (Mohammedan scriptures) under Maulana Shams-uddin Mohammed Abdullá. So pleased was Maulana Shams uddin with the intelligence and grasping power of his disciple that he used to love Hafiz more dearly than his own son, so much so, that he even gave him his own title of Shams-uddin.

When Hafiz completed his studies, his fame as an eminent person spread far and wide. The minister, Hájí Kavámuddín Hasan started a school for him so that he could teach Fikká (Mohammedan scriptures) and Hadís (Mohammed's discourses and activities) to his pupils.

All of Hafiz's time used to be spent in studying, teaching, worshipping and performing other spiritual practices. In those days, a great interest in poetry and verse-making pervaded the atmosphere of Iran, especially of Shiraj, where, only somewhat earlier, Shekh Sádí, by his Ghazals on love

devine as well as worldly, had created a new enthusiasm for poetry in the hearts of people. Hafiz, too, adopted Shekh Sadi's style and started offering mankind the wine of true love in the earthen cup of worldly love, Shekh Sadi having already filled that cup. But the drink served by Hafiz was so strong and exhilarating that people belonging to all classes became absolutely intoxicated by it, so much so, that they lost interest in all other things. In religious assemblies, shrines, musical soirees of nobles and aristocrats, markets, lanes and bye-lanes, everywhere, this very wine flowed freely and, at all places, only Hafiz Shiraz's Ghazals could be heard.

The wine mentioned in the Díván (collection) of Hafiz's Ghazals is not the extract of grapes or of any other such thing or things, but it is true love itself. Similarly the beauty which Hafiz has described is nothing but virtue and sincerity.

During Hafiz's entire life-time, it was days of trouble and tribulation for Iran, especially, for Shíraz. During the seventysix or seventyseven years that Hafiz lived, Shiraz had seven emperors and many bloody wars were fought. At the end came Timur's invasion which was truly a very great calamity. Hafiz saw with his own eyes these brutal and blood-thirsty monsters. Thus it was that he developed an utter dislike for the worldly prosperity of a few days, and he came to regard one hour of patience and calm in solitude as superior to life-long emperorship.

Hafiz was an extremely benign and courteous person. He would mix freely with all,—kings, paupers, and young as well as old. Amongst Sufi Faqirs who have adopted the path of love, Hafiz's name is mentioned with great respect and regard. His instructions wielded a profound influence on people. The outpourings of his heart have moved one and all. In every Persian home, his instructions used to be highly valued and appreciated.

Hafiz was deadly opposed to hypocrisy and deceit. He used to denounce preachers who proclaimed their own quali-

ties. He used to say that those who impart instructions to people in the mosque, would do in their private lives, things and deeds which are contrary to their very instructions.

Hafiz had a very sweet nature and temperament. There was no trace of egotism in him. He used to lead a very simple and contented life. He had a very pure heart and there was no trace of duplicity or crookedness in him. He was same by thought, word and deed. He was very outspoken, and would never show any special favour or partiality to anybody. He used to spend all his time in practising love and devotion. Whatever he earned, he would spend in the Sewa of Sadhus. His doors would ever remain open to friend and foe alike.

Hafiz's heart always used to remain drenched in the bliss of love. As in the case of Súr Dás and Meerá Báí, the sweet essence of love oozes from his verses and drips filtered through them. How noble his heart was is clearly evident from the following couplet :

I get pushes and jolts, and patiently put up with rebukes, but even then, remain happy and pleased, for, according to my religion, it is a sin to be angry and displeased with anybody.

While giving his opinion as to how a person should spend his life in this world, Hafiz writes.

Mould your way of living in this world such that even if you are the dust of the path, nobody's heart becomes impure by that dust.

At another place Hafiz writes :

Plant the sapling of friendliness which will bring the cherished fruit of the heart, and uproot the weed of enmity, for umpteen troubles will stem from it.

Worldly affluence and prosperity were of no value in the eyes of Hafiz. He used to say that worldly wealth and

prosperity were in no case fit to be rated so high that, for their sake, men should fight and quarrel with one another and thereby tarnish the sacred name of humanity

Do not fight and quarrel for wretched wealth and property. Live in peace and harmony with all. This only is the way to success.

Not only Iran, Hafiz's name became wellknown even in Baghdad and India. His Ghazals used to be carried by caravans from one country to another. Great emperors and nobles started inviting him. They used to send him presents and offerings along with letters of invitation. But because of his innate love for solitude and seclusion and contented nature, Hafiz did not like going to other places.

Attracted by Hafiz's name and fame, Sultán Mahmúd Sháh Bahmaní of South India and his minister Mir Fazal-ullá sent him a letter, inviting him to pay them a visit. They sent some gold coins along with the letter of invitation. With some of those gold coins, Hafiz repaid his debts and he gave some to his nephews. Keeping the remaining gold coins with him for his travel expenses, he started for India but, on the way, gave away even those gold coins to others and had no money left with him. Two merchants of Iran, who were coming to India, offered to pay his travel expenses and he was thus able to reach the port of Hurmuz. A ship had been sent from South India to receive him. He boarded the ship but hardly had the anchors been lifted when a cyclonic storm started blowing. Upset by this, he had the boat taken to the shore and disembarked, giving up his plan to visit India. He wrote a Ghazal and sent it to emperor Mahmud Shah through those two merchants.

Hafiz was a perfect Faqir and Sufi. He lived the life of a Darvesh and Faqir. He had two sons, of whom one died quite young. His sister, too, died, leaving behind children of tender age. Hafiz had taken upon himself the responsibility of bringing them up. His wife was very beautiful and good-natured but she could not give him her company for

long and passed away at the prime of her youth. He was so grief-stricken at her demise that he did not marry a second time.

Hafiz left his mortal coil in Shiraz in 791 Hijri, i. e., 1388 A. D., at an age of about seventysix years. Large crowds went in procession with the bier. All the nobles and aristocrats of the city and even the emperor joined the procession.

One who reads Hafiz's Díván passes into a state of rapture and intoxication. A young man cannot stand its elevating effect. His mind gets baffled by its charm. This was the reason why emperor Aurangzeb had forbidden its reading by the general public, as an ordinary person, who, unable to reach the depth and grasp the true significance, only sees its apparent or literal meaning, is easily led astray. Nevertheless, emperor Aurangzeb himself used to always keep Hafiz's Divan by his pillow. Indeed, wise people, of all religions, are sure to experience spiritual exhilaration from a perusal of Hafiz's Divan, to the Sufis, it is nectar like.

People take omens from Hafiz's Divan. Appropriate couplets are often found there providing answers to questions which generally arise with human affairs. It is said that when Hafiz left his mortal coil, some Ulma refused to say Namaz prayers before his bier. Shah Mansúr, who was also with the bier, wanted to know the reason. In reply, he was told that Hafiz was an infidel and it would not be right and proper to say Namaz prayers before the bier of an infidel. The emperor asked "What is the proof?" Those people replied "Let us have his Divan. We can show from it that Hafiz was an infidel." Accordingly, the Divan was brought and as soon as it was opened, the following couplet appeared.

Hesitate not to accompany Hafiz's bier, for though steeped in vice and sin, he will go to heaven.

On seeing this heaven-sent approval, all were silenced and, without raising a murmur, said Namaz prayers before the bier. From that very day, the name "Lisánul-Gaib" (heavenly voice) was given to Hafiz. He also used to be called "Tarjamánul Isrá" (interpreter or revealer of secrets).

Amongst the emperors of India, Humáyún and Jahángír were firm believers in omens. The books of Hafiz's Divan, from which they used to take omens, are still to be found in the Bánkípur Patná library. Several memos, including dates and years, in the handwritings of these two emperors, can be seen in these books in connection with the omens taken by them.

Once Núr Jahán Begam's necklace was stolen. It was night then. She began to consult Hafiz's Divan. The maid-servant, who had stolen the necklace, was herself standing with the lamp. When the Divan was opened, the following couplet appeared :

How bold is that thief who has the lamp on the palm  
of his hands.

Instantly, that maid-servant was caught. Ultimately, it was from her that the stolen necklace was recovered.

Some selected couplets from Hafiz's Divan are given below :

(1)

Last night the Guru, who is the knower of secrets, said  
to me "I will not conceal the secrets from you."

(2)

Perform acts of devotion with humility and meekness.  
If you are harsh to the world, the world will be harsh  
to you.

(3)

Shabd will not be audible to you if you are devoid of  
love and unacquainted with the secrets of Shabd. You

should, therefore, engage yourself in Abhyas and devotion, O virtuous one !

(4)

A call comes every moment from the heavenly regions above. Why do you not listen to it ? Why are you getting lost in the world ?

(5)

Whereabouts of the abode of Sat-Guru are not known to anyone. What is known is this much only that the sound of bell comes from there.

There is a wellknown couplet by Hafiz which means that if your master or Guru asks you to soak with wine the carpet or mat for saying Namaz prayers upon, do so instantly, and hesitate or doubt not in the slightest degree, for, He who gives out the secrets of the path to you, that is, your Master or Guru, is in the know of all the secrets of various stages on the way.

The story goes that on reading this couplet, a certain person got very much confused and wondered how such an improper statement could be made. To be able to understand the true significance of this couplet, he went to a certain Faqir who asked him to approach such and such butcher. At this, that person was all the more confounded wondering how was it that he had to go to a butcher for getting an explanation of the couplet. When he went to that butcher, the latter asked him to go to a certain prostitute and spend the night with her. This terribly upset that person who, beating his head, asked himself "What, after all, is all this fun ? For getting the explanation of a couplet, one person is directing me to another who, in his turn, is directing me to yet another. This fellow, butcher, is asking me to go to a prostitute. How is that possible for me ?"

Anyway, he did go to the prostitute's place and, striking the bargain with the taut who was there, paid the fees. The fellows who were there asked him to go to such and

such room where he would find the woman. The person was a decent fellow. What had he to do with a prostitute? Anyhow, after much hesitation, he went to the prostitute's room and quietly took his seat at one corner. He noticed that the prostitute was sitting quietly on a bedstead, sad and morose. After a long time, he asked her "Why are you so sad?" The woman replied "I am always sad and morose like this, and people come here and go." When that person asked what the reason was, she would not at first give any reply, but on being hard pressed, said "When I was a small child, it so happened that my parents were going somewhere and I also was with them. On the way, robbers killed them and, catching hold of me, sold me to some persons who wanted me to lead the life of a prostitute. But I hate this profession and that is why I remain sad and dejected all the time." As soon as that person heard this, he exclaimed "You are my sister." He had heard that his parents and sister had fallen in the hands of robbers. Be that as it may, he paid off the ransom money for his sister and freed her from the clutches of those who had bought her. He then ran to the above mentioned Faqir and, falling at his feet, said "I have now understood the meaning of that couplet. Certainly, not only should one not have any why and wherefore in what Guru says but one, with love and faith, should follow His instructions."

Here is another couplet by Hafiz :

The night is dark and sinister waves are rising and I am caught in a whirlpool. This is the condition I am in. How can those, who live on the shore and have not been overtaken by such a calamity, know anything about it ?

People think that they would practise Parmarth in the same easy going manner they attend to any other worldly pursuit. But they are mistaken. Indeed, true Parmarth lies in treading the path to death. Little do worldly people know what suffering that entails. That path is extremely difficult and fraught with grave danger. One will have to die

alive, then only will one become a Sadh. Spirituality from every part of the body and every nerve is extricated and withdrawn in devotional practices. The practitioner alone knows the suffering it involves ; others have no idea about it.

The story about Timur Lang (Timur, the Lame) and Hafiz is well known to the general public. At one time, the ancestors of Timur Lang were the rulers of Samarkand and Bukhárá. The areas adjoining Samarkand and Bukhárá were under the rule of the members of Chengiz Khan's family. They drove away Timur Lang and occupied Samarkand and Bukhara, too. Later on, Timur Lang conquered many countries but his heart's desire of reconquering the land of his ancestors and ascending its throne was not fulfilled. The fact was that Timur Lang was afraid of the descendants of Chengiz Khan, and they, on their part, were also afraid of him as he had defeated many kings and overrun several empires.

Finally, an understanding was reached between the two families in accordance with which Samarkand and Bukhara would be returned to Timur Lang and he would make Samarkand the capital of his empire, but the members of Chengiz Khan's family would be called emperors, while he would only assume the title of "Amír" (noble). And so, Timur came to be known as "Amír Timúr", though he annexed many kingdoms and was, in reality, an emperor of emperors.

Amir Timur then decorated Samarkand and Bukhara by spending crores of rupees and had celebrations on a large scale. He also appointed Hafiz as his Poet-Laureate. Hafiz, however, did not go to Samarkand but only sent a couplet : "If that wrestler of Shiraz brings my mind under control, I shall sacrifice the kingdoms of Samarkand and Bukhara on each black mole of his face." The same Samarkand and Bukhara which Timur valued so much were mere

trivialities in the eyes of Hafiz compared with that priceless treasure which can be obtained only on vanquishing the mind. The inner meaning of the couplet is the following : Wine is made on a large scale in Shiraz. Hence, by the wrestler or strong man of Shiraz is meant one who makes others drink wine. But, by 'wine', Hafiz had in his mind true love, i. e., love for the Lord. Hence, the strong man of Shiraz really means the Sat Guru. Hafiz in this couplet is thus saying that if, by the Sat Guru's grace and mercy, his mind comes under control, that is, he is able to gain mastery over his senses, he will, then, sacrifice the kingdoms of Samarkand and Bukhara before each mole on the person of his Guru.

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### (95) K A B Í R S Á H E B

Kabir Saheb manifested himself in this world on the day of the full moon in the month of Jeth in 1455 Vikram (1398 A. D.). His father's name was Núr Alí alias Níru and that of his mother Nímá. It is, however, said that Kabir Saheb was not actually begotten of Nima. His mother, in fact, was a Hindu widow. When she went to Ramanand Soami to have his Darshan and made obeisance to him, he blest her saying that she would have the gift of a son. Very much perturbed and weeping bitterly, she submitted "I am a widow, how is it possible for me to have a son ?" Ramanand Ji thereupon said "Those words have escaped from my mouth ; however, no one will come to know that you have conceived." In due course, a son was born to that woman who, for fear of public scandal, threw the child into a tank called Lahar-tará, from where the weaver, Niru, took him out and brought him home. According to "Kabir Kasautí", Niru got the child on a monday, which was the day of the full moon in the month of Jeth.

Kabir Saheb started initiating people from his very boyhood. It is said that he had become a disciple of Soami Rámánand. However, Kabir Saheb was a "Swatah Sant", i. e., a Sant incarnate, and his spiritual status was much

higher than that of Ramanand Ji. But out of respect for the tradition of adopting a Guru, Kabir Saheb accepted Ramanand Ji as his Guru. It is said that Ramanand Ji had no idea of the high spiritual status of his disciple. One day Ramanand Ji was engaged in worship behind a curtain. After having bathed the idol, he dressed it and put the crown on its head but forgot to put the flower-garland round its neck. Ramanand Ji was in a fix, for, if he took off the crown and then put the garland round the idol's neck, that would be showing disrespect to the deity; on the other hand, the garland was not large enough to pass round the crown. At that very time, a voice was heard from outside the threshold saying "Why not untie the knot of the garland and then put it round the idol's neck?" Ramanand Soami was astonished on hearing this. He came outside and taking Kabir Saheb in his arms, said "You are my Guru and I am your disciple."

Once Ramanand Soami sent Kabir Saheb for bringing milk for preparing "Pindá" on the occasion of the Shrád'h ceremony of his departed father. Kabir Saheb went out and started putting fodder into the mouth of a dead cow. Seeing this fun, his fellow-disciples asked him "What are you doing? How can a dead cow take fodder?" Kabir Saheb replied "It will do so in the same way that the departed father of our Guru will partake of Pindá."

Kabir Saheb was brought up in a weaver's home. Hence, he also used to do weaving. His wife's name was Loí. Kamál and Kamáli were, respectively, the names of his son and daughter. According to some, Kabir Saheb never married. He revived a dead boy and a dead girl and, after giving them the names of Kamal and Kamali, entrusted them to the care of Loi who was his disciple. However, this version does not appear to be correct.

Be that as it may, Loi was a true and high-class devotee of Kabir Saheb. To demonstrate the nature of true Bhakti (devotion) before a certain seeker, Kabir Saheb once hid the

spindle when he was weaving along with Loi on the loom and said to her "Look, my spindle has fallen ; make a search on the floor." She, thereupon, started searching for it. Finally, failing to find it and trembling with fear, she submitted, "I cannot find it out." At this, Kabir Saheb said "You are a fool. It is night now and you are searching for it without lighting a lamp. How can you get it ?" As soon as she heard this, it appeared as if she was truly feeling that it was pitch dark all round. She lighted the lamp and renewed her search. When it was taking too much time, Kabir Saheb angrily said "You are blind. See, I shall now find it out." At this, Loi said with tears in her eyes "Forgive me, O master ! I do not know how I got blinded by some stone-particles falling into my eyes." Kabir Saheb then told the above mentioned seeker "You see, this is what Bhakti (devotion) is. It makes the devotee see things exactly as the Lord dictates."

The Pandits of Kashi (Varanasi) were extremely jealous of Kabir Saheb. Once they invited all the beggars of the city on behalf of Kabir Saheb. When Kabir Saheb came to know of this, he prepared a little food in an earthen pot and, then, after having covered it with a piece of cloth, said to one of his disciples "Thrust your hands in the pot and as long as you get something from it, go on distributing it amongst the beggars. In this way, all ate to their fill and, thereafter, when the cover of cloth was removed, the earthen pot containing the food was found to be as full as ever. The same incident has also been described like this that the Lord Himself in the form of a grain-merchant had brought food grains loaded on oxen and had heaps of it kept before Kabir Saheb. It was not exhausted even after distribution to all the beggars.

When Kabir Saheb's name and fame spread throughout Kashi and large crowds of worldly people started gathering round him, he devised a method of scaring them all away. Putting one of his arms round the neck of a prostitute, and holding with his other hand a bottle full of water meant to

pass off as wine, he started roaming about in the city like a debauchee. People said that he had taken to vice and gave up going to his place.

In the same manner, taking the prostitute and the bottle with him, Kabir Saheb reached the Darbár (court) of the king of Kashi. Nobody paid him respect there. All were losing their faith in him. While returning from the Darbar, he poured a little water from the bottle on the ground and began to think. The king asked him the reason. Kabir Saheb replied "At this very moment, the dress of Jagannath Ji's cook in Puri caught fire and he was getting severe burns. By pouring this water, I extinguished that fire and saved the cook." The king was very much surprised. Sending a messenger to Puri, he got the news from there which confirmed what Kabir Saheb had said. The king felt very much ashamed to realize that he had not extended a warm reception and hospitality to such a great devotee as a result of being carried away by his outward behaviour.

The emperor Sikandar Lodi, after coming to Kashi, became angry with Kabir Saheb at the instigation of Mohammedans and Brahmans and, after getting him tied with a chain, had him thrown into the river Ganges, but he did not drown. He then had Kabir Saheb thrown into raging fire, but not even one hair of his body was scorched. Thereafter, a wild elephant was set upon him, but the elephant ran away.

Kabir Saheb's Gurumukh-disciple, Dharma Das Ji, who had attained the status of a Sant, was a wellknown banker. He was at first a follower of the traditional Hindu religion, and Brahmans used to gather at his place in large numbers. Kabir Saheb met him and explained to him the greatness of Sant Mat. After this, Dharma Das Ji arranged for a discussion on the Shastras (religious scriptures of Hindus) between Kabir Saheb and the Pandits of Kashi, at which the latter were completely defeated by Kabir Saheb.

Dharma Das Ji thereupon adopted Kabir Saheb as his Guru, and after receiving initiation from him, attended his Satsang and practised Surat Shabd Yoga for a long time. He attained the status of a Sant.

There is a place called Maghar in the Basti district, north of Kashi. Kabir Saheb went to that place and stayed there shortly before his departure to his original abode. By this action, he demonstrated to the world that, for a true devotee, all places and all countries are as good as thousands of Káshís and the status and greatness of Sants are such that even if they leave their mortal coil at a place like Maghar, they proceed to the highest region.

“Supremely confident of the greatness of his spiritual practices, Kabir left his mortal coil in Maghar. He now enjoys eternal bliss in the lap of the Imperishable Being.”

“Relying upon the greatness of Nam, Kabir left Kashi and went to Maghar. Dadu says, he met the Lord and his task was fully accomplished.”

In connection with Kabir Saheb's death, it is well known that Hindus wanted to cremate his dead body while Mohammedans were bent upon burying it. There was much fight and quarrel over the matter. But at the end, when the sheet with which the body had been covered was removed, people found that the body had vanished and, in its place, there were sweet-smelling flowers. The Hindus then took the flowers and built Kabir Saheb's Samadh over them in Maghar and Mohammedans constructed his grave there. Both the Samadh and the grave exist side by side even to this day.

Kabir Saheb's Isht was Sat Purush, a Deity of the purely spiritual region, whose status is much higher than that of Brahm and Pár Brahm. He impressed upon Jivas the importance of His Bhakti (devotion) and Upásaná (worship) and, in his Bání, has sung the glory of that Supreme Being and His Dhawnyátmak Name.

There is no doubt that Kabir Saheb was a Swatah Sant (born Sant) who, for the sake of showing the path of true Parmarath to Jivas, incarnated Himself in Kali Yug as the first Param Sant, as can be seen from His poetical compositions in which He has given out all the secrets of the Pind, the Brahmand and the purely spiritual region in a systematic and serial order.

Some quotations from Kabir Saheb's Bani are given below.

### Couplets

In all three 'Loks' (regions) and nine 'Khands' (divisions) there is no one superior to Guru. What He does, happens, and even the Creator Himself cannot do otherwise. (1)

o

This body is like a poisonous tendril and Guru is the reservoir of Amrit (nectar). Therefore, if one can find a true Guru even by offering one's head, it should be considered cheap. (2)

Do not delay in renouncing faith in a false guru, otherwise, you will not find the gateway to Shabd and will go astray again and again. (3)

Keep on waiting at the door of the Guru and bear all His admonitions and chastisements. One day you will be a recipient of His grace if you do not leave His door. (4)

He, who does not deviate from the path of Bhakti even on suffering loss, is a worthy son. Many a person in prosperity and opulence became ghost and goblin afterwards. (5)

In the month of Bhádon (rainy season) all rivers are in spate. That river alone is praiseworthy which flows even in the month of Jeth (the hottest part of summer). In other words, that love and devotion is laudable

which remains firm even in unfavourable circumstances.  
(6)

If the Beloved were in some foreign land, I could write letters to Him, but since He pervades my own body, mind and eyes, where is the question of my sending any message to Him ?  
(7)

Association with a Sadh for one moment or half a moment or even a quarter of a moment, eradicates a crore of sins.  
(8)

Kabir says that it is desirable to be cheated rather than cheat others, for, by being cheated, you would be happy but by cheating others, you are sure to be unhappy.  
(9)

Without fear, faith cannot be engendered nor can there be any love and affection. When fear is gone, gone, too, is all happiness and prosperity.  
(10)

By applying my mind to True Name, I keep away from Yam. With faith and trust in my Isht, I, a slave, escape from hell.  
(11)

Too much talking is not good, nor is the habit of keeping totally mum. Too much rain is not beneficial, nor is too strong sun.  
(12)

What is obtained naturally and spontaneously is like milk and what one gets by asking for is like water. Says Kabir, that which is acquired through a tussle, is like blood.  
(13)

Those given to the repetition of Nam will be very few, hardly one or two. On the other hand, those given to vice will be in thousands, i. e., almost the whole world will be steeped in vice. Nevertheless, if one imbibes just one particle of Nam — nay, even half a particle, all one's sins will be reduced to ashes,  
(14)

O Guru ! Lord of Lords ! Bestow on me the gift of devotion. I desire nothing but constant service of Thy Holy Feet. (15)

As your food is, so will your mind be. And your speech will bear the stamp of the water you drink. (16)  
Constant reading of scriptures has made stone of you and constant writing, a brick. Your inner recesses, however, have not received the slightest sprinkling or touch of love, says Kabir. (17)

I possess no strength to sing the Lord's praise loudly. It is enough that this slave is allowed to stay in the court of Sants. (18)

Kabir enjoins upon all that none should go to meet a Sadh empty-handed. One should offer Bhent to him, of what one has. (19)

On meeting a Sadh, one gets relieved of the noose of Kal and the blows of Jama. The bundle of sins is destroyed the moment one bows before a Sadh. (20)

One should seek Darshan of Sadh several times a day. It is as beneficial as the rain of the month of Kuár (September-October). (21)

If it is not possible to have Darshan several times a day, then at least one should have it twice a day. By the Darshan of Sadh one will be saved from the trickeries and snares of Kal. (22)

If it is not possible to have Darshan twice a day, one should have it at least once a day. By the Darshan of Sadh, the Jiva can cross over the ocean of worldly existence. (23)

If it is not possible to have Darshan once a day, then one should have it every alternate day. By the Darshan of Sadh, one becomes entitled to get human form. (24)

If it is not possible to have Darshan on alternate days, one must have it every third day. By the Darshan of Sadh, one can achieve salvation. (25)

If one is unable to have Darshan every third or fourth day, one should have it at least once a week. No more delay should be made. (26)

If it is not possible to have Darshan every week, one should have it fortnightly. By the Darshan of Sadh, the devotee makes his life fruitful. (27)

If it is not possible to have Darshan once in a fortnight, one should have it once in a month ; one should not delay in this matter. (28)

Kabir declares that if one cannot have Darshan every month, one should have it at least sixmonthly. One should not be careless in this matter. (29)

Kabir says if it is not possible to have Darshan once in six months, one must have it at least once a year. A Bhakt who acts upon this advice can defy Kal. (30)

Kabir Says that one who does not care to have Darshan even once a year will stand condemned and he will never be redeemed. (31)

Awaken a sleeping Sadh so that he may engage himself in the Sumiran of Nam. It is advisable to let these three remain sleeping — the deadhearted, lion and snake. (32)

Says Kabir that the elephant, being patient, eats a maund (40 kg) of food, while the dog, which has no patience, goes from door to door just for the sake of a small crumb. (33)

Money is the root cause of all evils. If a Sadh hoards money, he loses the Lord, (34)

Everybody likes sweets (pleasures) which act as poison. Nobody likes to drink the decoction of a Neem tree (Melia azadirachta, a tree every part of which is very bitter) which, although bitter in taste, is a panacea. (35)

Without sincerity, Sumiran of Nam is not possible ; and without fear, devotion is not possible. If there is a cover between Páras (philosopher's stone) and a base metal, how can the latter be converted into gold ? (36)

Kabir says, "Do not slander my Sadh or devotee. The moon, in spite of stains, gives light. (37)

One who gives a lot in charity hoping to get much in return, will be born an elephant in one's next life and eat fifty kilograms of food at the cost of his owner or master. (38)

Sanskrit is like the water of a well (available only to a few equipped with bucket and rope) while the Hindi language is like the flowing water of a river (open to all). The Hindi language is the language of the Sat Guru, containing the secrets of the most sublime Faith. (39)

People waste their lives reading scriptures, but no one becomes a Pandit (learned man). One would, indeed, become a Pandit if one just learns one word, 'Prem' or love. (40)

The knowledge of a Pandit is like the knowledge of a patridge which indicates omens to others but is not aware of the noose hanging round its own neck. (41)

Pandits and torch-bearers both are incapable of seeing. They show light to others but themselves are in darkness. (42)

The bird Papihá never breaks its vow ; if it breaks,

life is useless. It matters little if it dies, but it is a disgrace if the vow is broken. (43)

The bird Papíhá teaches its birdie never to drink any water other than the drops of the Swánti rain. This is the tradition of its race. (44)

(1)

### EXAMPLE OF THE DEAD

Listen, now, to what I say about the deathlike condition which overtakes a devotee, so that you can tread the path of devotion with discernment, discrimination and determination. (1)

It is something like the farmer's treatment of sugarcane in a series of processes. First, he cuts the cane into small bits. (2)

Next, he presses those small bits in his press. The juice which is thus extracted is then heated. (3)

By the heating, molasses are formed which, when further heated, give rise to 'Khánd' (coarse sugar). (4)

Again, Khánd, on being heated, produces white or refined sugar. (5)

When white sugar is further heated, it gives 'Misri' or sugar candy. (6)

And, finally, on heating 'Misri' (sugar candy), 'Qand' or white crystalline sugar is produced, which is to everyone's liking. (7)

The various heat treatments referred to represent the death processes, which are all full of agony. O Dharam Das ! A life in which one has to go through these processes while alive is difficult. Only a hero can lead such a life. But a coward, on hearing that his body and mind will be subjected to treatment with

fire, takes to his heels, never turning back, the fool that he is. (8)

He is a Sadhu who dies while alive. He is dear to the Sat Guru. All his troubles and tribulations are gone. Even the gods pin their hopes on him. (9)

### Shabd (2)

Having got the blessed human form, apply yourself to the repetition of the Lord's name. Why do you remain oblivious and negligent ? When will you get this opportunity again ? You will not be blessed with such a body any more and you will repent afterwards. Incomparable is the life of a human being amongst the eightyfour lakhs of categories of existence. It is a pity that even after getting such a life man does not come to his senses, no matter whether he is a king or a pauper. (1)

When you were in your mother's womb, you promised "O Lord ! I shall hereafter sing Thy praise and remember Thy name day and night. Riddest me, Thou, from this pain. Contemplating Thy holy feet, I shall remain with my attention rivetted on Thy name all the time. I shall never forget Thee, no matter whether this body survives or perishes." (2)

You did make all this promise. The Guru, in His mercy, took you out of your predicament. You have forgotten all that now and have become subservient to Maya. Having forgotten the promises you made whilst in womb, your attention has been drawn towards this side, i. e., the world. Twelve years of your life passed in games and pastimes and you did not come to your senses. (3)

You became a victim of worldly pleasures and got lost in the intoxication of youth, so much so, that as you walked, you even admired your own shadow, and you

used to say angry words. Applying sandal paste and scents to your body and putting on coloured dress, you loitered from lane to lane and gave a smile on seeing others' wives.

Your youth is now gone and old age has overtaken you. Your head now shakes and your legs ache as you walk. Water flows down your eyes all the time and your nose is running. Your mouth stinks. Your throat is choked with phlegm. You have lost all interest in your family and home. (5)

You may have your father, mother, son and wife, but who will go with you now ? Your connections with everything and everybody will be cut off, including your body, wealth, family, home and occupation. Ultimately, Kal will drag you along and Jam's noose will be round your neck. Without the Sat Guru, you cannot be saved. You try to understand this, O you pig-headed one ! (6)

Your body will be fruitful if you engender love for Sat Guru and fix your attention on His holy feet, knowing this to be the path of redemption. Enshrine Guru's Nám within and remain without any fear. No pain or sorrow can then overtake you. This, indeed, is the way to redemption, says Kabir. (7)

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### Shabd (3)

This is an alien region. You are not to stay here. This world is a small packet of paper which will dissolve if just one drop of water falls on it. (1)

This world is a hedge of thorns. You will die pricked and tormented by them. (2)

This world is a mere collection of weeds and bushes which will be reduced to ashes by fire. (3)

Listen, O brother Sadhu ! Sat Guru's Nam alone will give you stability. This is what Kabir says. (4)

#### Shabd (4)

I have staked my body, mind and wealth. In the game of Chaupar\* with my Beloved, I have staked my body and mind. If I lose, I become my Beloved's and if I gain, He becomes mine. (1)

In the game of Chaupar, it is my heart's desire to form a pair with my beloved, but alas ! My counter remains all alone, and there is no hope of its survival. (2)

The houses or squares, though of four different colours, are all really one and the same and they are traversed by all kinds of people representing the counters or pieces. He is a rare one who, in thoughts, words and deeds, cultivates love for the beloved. (3)

Wandering in the cycle of 'Chaurásí', the Jiva reaches a dead end at the throw of 'Paú', i. e., one, and if in the throw of dice, the latter does not show 'Pau', he has to go through the same cycle again. (4)

Says Kabir to Dharam Das "Do not lose a winning game. Elevate your Surat now. Then will you be a fortunate one." (5)

#### Shabd (5)

When I became intoxicated with the Lord's love, people said that I had turned mad. (1)

Only he, whose heart has been wounded, knows about it. Others will not understand his pain even if told about the same. (2)

The black-bee flies taking the worm with it and dyes the latter in its own colour. (3)

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\* See "Glossary of Radhasoami Faith."

The Tattwa (Shabd) resounds in the Sukhmaná, which is known only to one dear to Nám. (4)

I am Thy servant and slave, O Lord. It is in Thy love that I have been entangled. (5)

I am steeped in infatuation. Tell me how I can then meet the Beloved. (6)

O Lord, cast one merciful glance at this slave and redeem him from the world. (7)

Kabir beseeches Thee that Thou mayest abide in His heart. (8)

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### Shabd (6)

Who will take me to my Guru ? I cannot live without Him. I am the deer and He is the hunter. He shoots the arrow of Shabd at me. Only he, who is hit and wounded, knows. Others know little about his pain. (1)

I am thirsty of the Beloved's love and all the time cry out "O my Beloved, my Beloved" I remain alive if only I can meet Thee, otherwise, I shall readily lay down my life. (2)

I have been dyed in yellow. People say that I am suffering from a physical ailment. I undertake as many as six fasts to be able to meet the Beloved. (3)

Says Kabir, "Listen, O Surat engaged in spiritual practices. Apply your mind to the current of Shabd issuing from the holy feet of the Lord and flowing in your body. Because of your love, the Lord or Guru will come again and meet you." (4)

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### Shabd (7)

O, the embodiment of Nam ! Grantest me Thy Darshan.

Sad at heart without Thee, I cry out day and night  
 "Grantest me Thy Darshan openly. Heedest Thou my  
 prayer, O my Lord, my Beloved ! I sacrifice myself  
 before Thee. Makest Thou no delay." (1)

I find food distasteful and know no sleep. Yearning  
 for Thee is tormenting me all the time. (2)

I am extremely restless, and I cannot live without Thy  
 Darshan. My body is on fire, and flames are leaping  
 forth from my innermost recesses. Who can bear such  
 excruciating pain ? (3)

Tears flow down my eyes in torrents, as I keep my  
 gaze fixed on Thy path. (4)

Forgivest, Thou, my good and evil qualities as well as  
 my faults and takest not into consideration my short-  
 comings. Adoptest Thou a benign and noble attitude,  
 O, the Purifier of fallen ones ! Forgettest not Thine  
 vow. (5)

I have lost all interest in my heart and home. I have  
 turned a hard and heavy stone and I cannot even  
 move. (6)

May my eyes remain looking intently at Thee, lost in  
 the bliss of Thy Darshan. May there not be a moment's  
 interruption in my love for Thee. Givest me Thine  
 arm, Thou the redeemer. Freeest me this time from  
 my state of imprisonment. (7)

Like the fish dieing without water, my body is in a  
 state of pain and suffering without Thee. (8)

Thy slave Kabir prays to Thee "O Thou Great One !  
 Heedest Thou my prayer. Grantest me Thy mercy  
 and considerest me as Thine own." (9)

## (96) R A I D Á S

Raidás Jí was a great devotee whose poetical compositions, like the sun, dispel one's inner darkness and doubts. He was born in Varanasi and was a contemporary of Kabir Saheb.

It is said that in his previous life he was a disciple of Swami Ramanand and he used to beg for alms for his master. A certain trader used to always call Raidas Ji to him and offer him alms but Raidas Ji would never accept alms from that trader. One day, since it was raining, Raidas Ji brought food-stuff for cooking from that very trader. When his master wanted to take food, the Lord's form did not appear before him in Dhyan. Thereupon, he enquired Raidas Ji from whom he had brought the food articles that day. When, on enquiry, it was found that the said trader used to have business transactions with Chamárs (workers in leather, shoemakers), the master cursed his disciple saying that in his next life he would be born in the family of a Chamár. Raidas Ji, accordingly, left his mortal coil as a Brahman and was born of a Chamárín (Chamar woman) called Ghurbiniá in the family of a Chamár whose name was Ragghú. But because of the Bhakti performed by him in his previous life and also by his Guru's grace and mercy, Raidas Ji remembered the incidents of his past life. After being born, he did not take his mother's milk on the ground that eating and drinking were forbidden without the Lord's order. Under the Lord's inspiration, Ramanand Ji went to the house of the abovementioned Chamár and, after pronouncing the Mantra (esoteric formula) gave the new born baby the name of Ravidas. Later on, people started calling him Raidas.

On coming of age, Raidas Ji started devoting himself to the Sewá of Sadhus. He would spend on their Sewa any money that would come to his hands. This was not to the liking of his father, Ragghu, though he had enough money with him. Very much displeased, he turned Raidas Ji out of his house along with his wife and indicated to them a

spot at the back of his house where they could stay. That place, however, did not have even a thatch over it and, what was worse, Ragghu did not give them even a single penny. Raidas Ji started living at that very place quite happily. He used to make shoes and earn a living thereby. Out of his own earnings, he had a thatched roof laid over that place. To Sadhus, Mahatmas and devotees, he would offer shoes for their use free of cost, helping them to put them on with his own hands. Though subject to much pain and suffering because of poverty, he used to remain lost in the bliss of the Lord's Dhyān. Seeing his care-free life of destitution, the Lord was moved to pity. Coming to him in the garb of a Sadhu, He gave him a philosopher's stone, and after describing its properties, asked him to keep it with care. At this, Raidas Ji said "I do not hanker after anything. My wealth and property is the treasure of Nām. What shall I do with this philosopher's stone?" That Sadhu even gave a demonstration by converting one of the shoe-making tools made of iron into gold but Raidas Ji felt sorry thinking that this tool also had now become useless. Helpless because of the Sadhu's insistence, Raidas Ji asked him to shove it somewhere in the thatched roof. The Sadhu left after keeping it under that roof. He came again after thirteen months and found Raidas Ji in the same straitened circumstances. He asked Raidas Ji "What happened to that philosopher's stone?" Raidas Ji replied "Look for it at the same place where you shoved it in."

One day, five gold coins were found from the basket containing the paraphernalia for worship. At this Raidas Ji got scared of even performing the Sewa of the Lord. The Lord thereupon told him in a dream "Though you do not have the slightest greed for anything, accept hence forward whatever I give you. Do not show disrespect to my Prashad." Thereafter, Raidas Ji used to accept whatever he would get in this manner and with that money, he got a Dharamshālā (resting place for pilgrims) and a temple built, and engaged Brahmans for worshipping the deity in the temple. At this, the Pandits felt much heart-burning and

they complained to the king that Raidas Ji, though a Chamár, was pretending to be a Brahman, which he had no right to do, and he, therefore, deserved punishment. On being summoned by the king, Raidas Ji went to him without any fear. So great was Raidas Ji's influence on the king that he said only a few words to him with all due courtesy and respect and then bade him farewell.

The queen of Chittor who had come to pay a visit to Kashi, adopted Raidas Ji as her Guru on hearing of his greatness. This added fuel to the fire already burning in the hearts of the Brahmans and they started saying that the queen had lost all sense and understanding. The queen called a meeting where she had discussions held between Raidas Ji and the Brahmans. The Pandits would regard the caste system as superior. Raidas Ji, on the other hand, sought to demonstrate that this system had little value and he would assign a higher position to Bhakti (devotion). After a great deal of debate and discussion it was decided that the party to which the idol enshrined on the throne would be pleased to go, would be regarded as dear to the Lord. Thereupon the Brahmans recited from the Vedas and chanted Mantras for three 'Pahars' (nine hours), but all to no avail. When Raidas Ji's turn came and he offered his prayers in an attitude of love and humility, the idol instantly left the throne and, coming to Raidas Ji, sat on his lap. Seeing this, all were astounded.

The queen thereafter returned to Chittor. She wrote to Raidas Ji in all humility inviting him to visit her capital. Raidas Ji thereupon went to Chittor and the queen was very happy. She gave away a large sum of money in charity and invited Brahmans to dinner at her palace. The Brahmans thought that since the queen had become the disciple of a Chamár, they would accept only dry food-stuff from the queen which they would then cook themselves. This is what was done, but when they sat in rows, for dinner, they found that between every pair of Brahmans, one Raidas Ji was sitting. All were dumbfounded by this strange

phenomenon. Many fell at Raidas Ji's feet and received initiation from him. In order to strengthen the faith of all present, he flayed himself and showed the sacred thread inside his body, saying that this was the true and inner sacred thread.

On hearing of Raidas Ji's greatness, a certain rich person went to his hermitage to have his Darshan and attend his Satsang. Satsang over, a certain Chamár brought water sanctified by Raidas Ji in a big shoe and distributed it to all present. When it was offered to the said rich person, he did take it, but because of a feeling of abhorrence and hate, he threw it, behind above his head. Some of the 'Charnámrit' (sanctified water) dried up on the jacket he was wearing. Back home, he gave away his clothes to the sweeper with a view to self-purification. From that very day, he started developing symptoms of leprosy and the body of the sweeper who had put on the clothes on which the sanctified water had fallen began to look like gold and assumed a marked brilliance. When the rich man was not cured even after much treatment, he, on the advice of his friends, again went to the hermitage of Raidas Ji in the hope of getting sanctified water. But on that day sanctified water was not distributed. The rich man thereupon prayed to Raidas Ji that he might be given some sanctified water. He got the reply that the 'Charnamrit' (sanctified water) which would be available now would be just plain water and the current of mercy would not be present therein. A few days after, on the rich man's bemoaning and repenting a great deal, he was cured by the benign glance of Raidas Ji.

In Kashi, a certain Brahman used to go to the river Ganges every day to offer flowers, betel leaves and areca nuts. One day he went to Raidas Ji's shop to buy shoes. In the course of conversation, the topic of Gangá-Pujá (Ganges-worship) came up for discussion. Raidas Ji said to that Brahman "I am giving you these shoes free, but kindly offer these areca nuts of mine also to Gangá Jí (the Ganges)." The Brahman kept those areca nuts in his pocket. The next

day, after taking his bath in the Ganges, he made offerings of areca nuts on behalf of his clients, and then, as he was returning, he took out Raidas Ji's areca nuts from his pocket and threw them into the Ganges from a distance with his back turned towards the river. Ganga Ji raised her hands above the water and took those areca nuts. Seeing this fun, that Brahman said

One should not want to know a person's caste and lineage. He, who repeats the Lord's name, becomes His own.

Raidas Ji lived for full 120 years before departing to his original abode.

Some of Raidas Ji's Shabds (hymns) are given below.

### Shabd (1)

O mind ! repeat Ram's name with care. Why are you oblivious under Maya's delusion ? You will go from here empty handed. I doubt if anyone is your own here, including your relations, son and wife. Scared of you, they will all turn you out and cremate your dead body. (1)

Think for yourself who will come to your help when life departs from you. This opportunity will not come to you again and you will be losing a winning game. (2)

All these objects of Maya are worthless. They turn the Jiva from the path of Bhakti. Says Raidas, the Guru's words are true, which the Jiva should never forget. (3)

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### Shabd (2)

Listen, O brother, Bhakti is such that once it dawns on you, all your pride and egotism will be gone. What will you gain by dancing and singing, and by practising penance ? What will you achieve by wash-

ing the feet of the guru if you fail to recognise the true essence ? (1)

What benefit will you derive by shaving your head, going on pilgrimage and undertaking fasts ? Without recognising the supreme truth, no one can be the Lord's slave, devotee and servant. (2)

Says Raidas, Bhakti is still far from you. If you are fortunate, you will get its gift. Give up all pride and erase your I-ness. Consider yourself insignificant and lowly like an ant and attain the fruit of Bhakti. (3)

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### Shabd (3)

O Ram (Lord) ! Even if Thou breakest off all relations with me, I shall not sever my connections with Thee, for, breaking away from Thee, with whom else shall I establish a link ? I have no desire to go on pilgrimage or undertake fasts. I repose trust in Thy lotus feet. (1)

Wherever I go, it will be Thy worship in which I shall engage. There is no deity equal to Thee. (2)

I shall join my mind with the Lord, and having established a link with Him, shall break off relations with all others. (3)

Says Raidas from the bottom of his heart that he depends upon the Lord all the time. (4)

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### Shabd (4)

Now that the repetition of Nam has taken hold of me, how can I forsake IT ? Thou art, O Lord, sandal and I am water permeated through and through by Thy sweet scent, (1)

Thou art, O Lord, dense forest and I am a peacock. I keep my attention fixed on Thee as the Chakor does on the moon. (2)

Thou art, O Lord, the lamp and I am the wick. Thy light shines within me all the time. (3)

Thou art, O Lord, the pearl and I am the thread. It is a nice combination like gold and Suhágá (borax). (4)

Thou art, O Lord, the master, and I, thy servant. Such is the Bhakti which Raidas performs. (5)

### Shabd (5)

O Lord, the life of the cosmos, O Ram, O Muráří ! I take the refuge of Thy association. Water flowing from all streams merges in the Ganges and earns the epithet of 'Gangodak' (holy water of the Ganges). Such is the greatness of good association. (1)

If the 'Swanti' drops fall on the snake's head, they turn into poison. From the same Swanti drops, pearl is produced, such is the greatness of good association. (2)

Thou art, O Lord, the sandal-wood tree and I am only a worthless tree. But by being near you, I give out sweet aroma due to the greatness of good association. (3)

I am lowly by caste, lowly by work and lowly by occupation. Thou hast elevated me, O Lord, to a high position from a lowly status, says the Chamár Raidas. (4)

### (97) G Ú N G Á P Í R

His original name was Jháma Jí. He was a Punvár Rajpút by caste. His father's name was Lohtá, Lohta Jí

belonged to the fortieth generation descending from Bhartri, Hari, the brother of the famous Vikramaditya. Jhama Ji remained a dumb boy, up to the age of twelve and that is why he came to be known as the Gúngá (dumb) Pír later on. His father entrusted him with the task of tending cows, and he used to do this work very efficiently. His father was sorry that the boy, though undoubtedly bright and intelligent, was unfortunately dumb. The Pandits advised him to perform a Yagya. They tried their best to light a fire for making offerings to it, but failed. Everybody felt tired and helpless, when Jhamaji all of a sudden blurted out saying "How can the fire be lighted ? None of you have adopted a Guru." And it was from that time that he started speaking. He, however, continued to tend cattle. He was seen to perform many miracles. When he used to cry out "O red ones, go and drink water", only those cows which had a red colour would get up and proceed for drinking water.

This Mahatma used to practise Yoga. He also initiated his disciples in the practice of Yoga. His disciples included people of all castes and classes and they used to be called "Vishnoi." Many villages in Márwár are inhabited by Vishnois. His Samadh can be found in the village called Tálvá, P. O. Imtar, in the princely state of Bíkáner. The verses composed by him are very sweet and full of inner secrets. He lived from the eighth day of the dark half of Bhádon in 1500 Vikram to the ninth day of the dark half of Magsar in Vikram 1593 (1443 A. D. to 1536 A. D.).

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### (98) N Á N A K S Á H E B

Nának Sáheb was born during the reign of Sultan Bahlol Lodi early in the morning of the day of the full moon in Kátik in 1526 Vikram (1469 A.D.). His mother was Triptán who was the wife of a Bedi Khatrí, Kalyan Chand by name. Several persons have mentioned Kálú Chand and even Kálú Ji as his father's name. Kalyan Chand Ji was the manager of Governor Bulár Pathán of the city of Talvandi

in Sharakpur Tahsíl (revenue jurisdiction) in the Lahore district of Punjab. He had a daughter elder than his son, and her name was Bíbí Nánkí. Talwandi is now known as Nán-Káná Saheb.

From his very boyhood, Guru Nanak was of a placid temperament. He would like to sit in seclusion most of the time. As soon as he would take his seat, he would assume the posture of Padmásan and invariably utter something or the other in the manner of repeating the Lord's name. When only five years old, he used to explain to his boy friends religious matters and the greatness of the Supreme Being. At times, he used to distribute to Faqirs and visitors whatever he could find at home.

Astrologers were astonished on finding that his horoscope was in many ways similar to those of spiritual leaders who had incarnated themselves in this world. All the astrologers said that such a horoscope could not be that of an ordinary human being, rather, it was that of some great incarnation whose influence would spread all over the world.

It used to be his mother's ardent desire that her boy, Nanak, should also play outdoors, with other boys. One day, being hard pressed by his mother, Nanak Ji came out to play with the other boys. He started asking them if they wanted to play some new game or the same old games as they would be playing on other days. All the boys said that they wanted to play some new game. Thereafter, Nanak Ji made all the boys sit quiet in a circle assuming the posture of Padmásan and asked them to go on repeating "Satt Kartár (the True Creator)" mentally. His mother came with high hopes of seeing how her Nanak was playing. But seeing all the boys sitting quiet without making a stir, she was all the more astonished.

When Nanak Ji reached the age of 5 or 6 years, his father, sent him to Gopal Pandit's Páthshálá (school) to study Hindi. That was in 1475 A. D. However, when the Pandit for the first time wrote out the numerals and asked

Nanak Ji to learn them, the latter said, "Any person, who had learnt how to maintain accounts of wordly transactions, had to go through much pain and suffering, and so, I have nothing to do with such things. I have come to learn only the name of the Lord and you, too, would do well to give up this kind of false and worthless education and learn the true and right lessons." Hearing this, the Pandit fell at Guru Nanak's feet and thereafter, started deriving the benefit of his Satsang in seclusion off and on.

In 1478 A. D., Nanak Ji was sent to Pandit Brij Lal to Study Sanskrit under him. On the very first day, Nanak Saheb gave so profound instructions to the Pandit for awakening him to spiritual matters that the latter, coming down from the high pedestal of a teacher, became Nanak Ji's disciple and adopted his Saran.

Finding Nanak Saheb totally indifferent towards studies, his father wanted to assign some kind of domestic work to him. Accordingly, he entrusted Nanak Ji with the work of tending cattle. But there, too, Nanak Ji would either remain lost in the Lord's Dhyān or be absorbed in discussions on spiritual matters with other cow-herd boys. The result was that the cows and buffaloes would stray into others' fields and eat the standing crops. Hence, Nanak Ji was not considered fit for this work, too.

His father once more wanted to keep him engaged in studies and hence, in 1480 A. D., he sent Nanak Ji to Maulana Ruknuddin to learn Persian. But, as in the case of the Pandit already mentioned, Nank Ji taught Maulana also the true alphabet and made him his disciple,

Nanak Ji's father thereafter wanted him to undergo the ceremony of putting on the sacred thread. He called the priest at an auspicious moment. When the time for making Nanak Ji put on the sacred thread came, he asserted that this kind of sacred thread would be of no use, and the explanation which he gave to the priest as to what constituted true sacred thread had such a profound influence on the

latter that he became a disciple of Nanak Ji.

When Nanak Saheb was seven years old, his aunt (mother's sister) one day came to meet his mother and when the aunt saw Nanak Ji distributing to Sadhus and hungry people whatever he could lay his hands upon at home, she told Nanak Ji's mother that her son appeared to her to have gone mad. Hearing his aunt, Guru Nanak said "Aunt ! A mad one like me will be born in your home, too." And indeed, a certain Mahatma called Ram Ratna came to be born in her family. Amongst Bairági Sadhus he is considered to be a great Gyáni.

In this way, whatever came out naturally and automatically from his mouth while walking or playing or frolicking about, would be found coming true in a few days. He would never forget to talk of the glory and greatness of the Lord and utter words of admonition to anyone he would chance to meet, young or old. On seeing this peculiar style and behaviour of Guru Nanak, people started saying all kinds of things, good and bad, about him, and as their discussions continued to reach his father's ears, all kinds of thoughts concerning his son came to agitate his mind. In fact, he consulted a Vaid (physician) lest his son should contract a serious illness as a sequel to his condition of withdrawal and indifference towards the world. When the Vaid felt his pulse, Nanak Saheb said,

"I am lost in love for the Lord, and you want to give me medicine."

Fearing lest by falling in the company of Sadhus and Faqirs, Nanak Ji, too, might put on the garb of a Faqir, his father thought it would be right to have him engaged in some kind of trade or business. With this idea he sent Nanak Ji with some money to Lahore in the company of a trusted person called Bálá and urged him to take up some highly profitable business.

When, in the course of their travel, they reached a

village called Chúhar-káná, they met some Sadhus who were very hungry. Guru Nanak said that they could not hope for a better business than this. With the money given by his father, he held a Bhandara feast and then came back to Talvandi empty handed. He, however, did not go home but took his seat under a 'Pílú' tree (the tree *Careya arborea*) assuming the posture of a Yogi. This tree is now well-known as 'Tambú Saheb'.

When Nanak Saheb's father learnt from Bálá what his son had done, he became very angry and, catching hold of Nanak Saheb, took him to Rai Bolár and told him all that had happened. Rai Bolar said to Nanak Saheb's father "Friend ! How long can you remain unmindful of such a perfect Faqir as your son ? Take from me whatever you need for spending on his account." Even then, however, Nanak Saheb's father used to remain sad and morose because of his son. At the end, he sent Nanak Saheb to his sister, Bibi Nanki Ji, and brother-in-law, Lala Jai Ram, in Sultanpur. The latter, who was the Díván of Daulat Khan Lodi, received Nanak Saheb with great love and affection.

Out of respect for his sister and brother-in-law, Guru Nanak accepted the job of a grocer in the Nawab's grocery in 1485 A. D. Every day, he used to distribute to Sadhus and Faqirs four times the amount of food-stuffs he would weigh out for the Nawab's house-hold, and would maintain no accounts at all. People complained to the Nawab, but on checking, it was found that the Nawab himself owed something to Guru Nanak.

One day while weighing wheat-flour, he went on counting one, two, three and so on and then, when he reached Terá or thirteen, he forgot all about the counting, and saying "Terá, Terá", again and again weighed out all the wheat-flour. 'Terá' also means yours, and when Guru Nanak said "Terá, Terá", he really meant "Yours, O Lord." From that day, he gave up the job at the grocery.

He would say "No one is Hindu and none a

Mohammedan", when anyone questioned him about the matter. These words used to come out of his mouth in such a forthright manner that people who heard him became astounded.

In 1488 A. D., on being hard pressed by his sister and brother-in-law, he got married to Sulakshaná, the daughter of Múl Chand Choná Khatri of Pakkho in Gurudaspur district. In 1494 A. D., his son Shri Chandra was born to him, who later on founded the Udási sect (a class of Sadhus who renounce the world). Guru Nanak's second son, Lakshmi Chand was born in 1496 A. D.

Once Mardáná Mírásí came to Guru Nanak to seek monetary help from him for meeting the marriage expenses of his daughter. After having made out a list of all the things which were required, Guru Saheb gave the list to Bhagirath and then sent him to Lahore. There Mansukh, after having tied the various things taken from him into a bundle, gave it to Mardana, but, about a good set of bangles, he said that he (Mardana) would get it after two days. Mardana had orders to stay in Lahore for one day only, and so he expressed his inability to stay there for a couple of days. At this Mansukh said "Even the emperor's servant is not so particular about carrying out the orders of his master. What great man's servant are you that you are so much afraid?" Bhagirath mentioned the Sat Guru's name and told Mansukh something about his greatness. The two had discussions whole night. Mansukh felt a great longing at heart to have Nanak Saheb's Darshan and, next morning, he came to Sultanpur. Guru Saheb cast His benign glance on him as soon as he appeared before Him and said :

This Mansukh was immature in Bhakti earlier. Now he wants to perform Bhakti after becoming sincere and true by Nam's Pratap (greatness). So, I took him into my fold. Glory to Sant who makes the insignificant Jiva equal to Him as the black-bee makes a mere worm its equal.

The result of Guru Nanak's preachings was such that within a short time many Hindus as well as Mohammedans started taking shelter under His holy feet. The Kájís and Mulláhs could not stand this. They in a body complained to the Nawab "This person is advising people to regard Hindus and Mohammedans as equal. We shall agree that he is true and sincere if only he says Namáz (prayers) with us in the mosque."

On going to the mosque, all stood up for saying Namaz prayers but Guru Nanak sat down at one corner. Namaz prayers over, all said that his hypocrisy had now been exposed. When the Nawab asked for an explanation, he said "If someone worships Khuda sincerely and with undivided attention, I shall certainly give him my company but I have nothing to do with one who cannot keep his attention fixed. Not to speak of ordinary people, the attention of even the Nawab and the Kaji was not fixed on the Namaz prayers. As for the Nawab, he was mentally buying horses in Kábul and Kandhár and the Kaji Saheb's mind was running to save the new-born foal of his mare from falling into the well in the stable and drowning. Whose worship is this ? Is this worshipping the Lord ?" On hearing this blunt truth and getting evidence of Guru Nanak's power of knowing the secrets of others' hearts, both the Nawab and the Kaji were dumbfounded. Falling at his feet, they said "You are Allah's favourite. What do you advise us for our good here, in this world, as well as hereafter ?" The Guru Saheb replied "Say five Namaz prayers all the time as I explain to you." He then recited the Shabd (hymn) beginning with "Panj Namaza Wakt Panj" (Five Namaz prayers at five different times) and explained to them matters of spiritual interest for a long time.

When large crowds started gathering round him, the Guru Saheb decided to leave Sultanpur. At that very time, a person called Mardáná, who belonged to his father's house-hold and who had been sent by his father from Talvandi, came to him to enquire about his health. But

when he found that the Guru Saheb was thinking of proceeding on travels, he also expressed a desire to accompany the Guru Saheb, to which the latter agreed. But Mardana submitted to him that he would come back after visiting his family and home once and, till then, Guru Saheb might please stay on at that very place.

On learning that Guru Nanak intended to put on the garb of a Faqir, the members of his own family and the family of his in-laws as well as his other relations came to him and tried their best to dissuade him from executing his plans. But Guru Saheb would not pay any heed to their pleadings and in 1499 A. D., started on his first country-wide travel taking Bálá and Mardáná with him.

Leaving Sultánpur, he came to Láhore where he had discussions on Sant Mat with saint Saiyad Ahmad, the Guru of emperor Sikandar Lodi, and after imparting instructions to many Sadhus and house-holders in true religion in the course of seven days, proceeded to Aímnábád. There, he firmly declined the invitation of Divan Malik Bhágo to join a 'Brahm Bhoj' (feast as a mark of reverence for Brahm) arranged by him. He showed the entire assembly that the cereals acquired by Malik Bhago by resorting to unjust methods and tyranny was blood and blood only. He then explained to all the great merit of food acquired by just and rightful means.

In 1503 A. D., Guru Saheb reached Siálkot and initiated Hamzá Gaus, a wellknown Faqir of that place. Thereafter, thinking of proceeding towards the East, he went to Hardwár Kankhal. After initiating many priests and pilgrims in true religion there, he reached Delhi in 1504 A. D.

After performing several miracles in Delhi and initiating emperor Sikandar Lodi, some wellknown Faqirs like Míán Márúf and many householders and Sadhus in true religion on the way, he reached Aligarh. From there, he went to Agra via Mathura and Brindaban. Passing through

Kanpur, Lucknow and Ajodhya, he reached Kashi (Varanasi) in 1506 A. D., where he rested in a garden which is now called "Guru Ká Bágh" (the Guru's garden). The Guru's arrival in Kashi created considerable excitement and enthusiasm there. People professing various faiths, including Hindus and Mohammedans, used to come everyday to have the Guru's Darshan and listen to spiritual instructions imparted by him.

Kabir Saheb was not in Kashi during those days. He had gone out of Kashi, to a village called Raghu Náth Pur. Hearing of Nanak Saheb's arrival in Kashi, he was returning there and, at the same time Nanak Saheb was proceeding towards Raghunathpur. The two great souls met on the way. They had discussions and conversations for several days, the gist of which is now known as "Kabir Ji ki Goshti."

It is wrong to say that Nanak Saheb was born after Kabir Saheb had left his mortal coil. It is because of this misunderstanding that people question the authenticity of "Kabir Goshti." As a matter of fact, Kabir Saheb's life-span covered the period 1455 to 1575 Vikram. According to Dhani Dharam Das Ji, it is 1571 instead of 1575. In the authentic book "Kabir Kasauti", it has been written :

Kabir went to Maghar in 1575 Vikram, and left his mortal coil on the eleventh day of the bright half of Mágh.

Nanak Saheb was born in 1526 Vikram. From all this evidence, it is established that the two great souls were contemporaries during the period 1526 to 1571 or 1575 Vikram.

After staying in Kashi for some time, Nanak Saheb went to Gayá in 1506 A. D., passing through Buxur, Chhapra, Patna, etc. on the way. Gaya is the main centre where Hindus make offerings of 'Pindá' (obsequial cake)

and 'Deep' (lamps) to their departed ancestors. Here, the Guru Saheb was hard pressed by the priests to offer Pindá, but without paying any heed to their words, he gave them instructions like this :

Only the Lord's Nam is my lamp in which I pour the oil of pain and misery (i. e., just as the lamp gives light only when oil is burnt, so also Sumiran of Nam is possible if only one experiences pain and suffering). That Nám has spread the light of Gyán (Knowledge) and dispelled the darkness of ignorance. By that Nám's Pratáp (power), connection with Jama is severed.

From there, after visiting several cities, he went up to Assam, from where, after passing through Calcutta, Cuttack and other places, he reached Jagannath Puri in 1509 A. D. After dispelling the delusion to which people were subject, and exposing the hollowness of the hypocritical practices to which they had been tied down, he imparted them spiritual instructions explaining the meaning of Parmáarthí Ártí (singing the Lord's praise as contemplated in true Parmarth). Awakening innumerable Adhikari (spiritually fit) Jivas and holding discussions with Sadhus and Faqirs on the way, he finally returned to Sultanpur and his first travel came to an end.

In 1510 A. D., Nanak Saheb started on his journey towards the South to spread the glory of Sat Nam there. After awakening many Jivas in the regions of Marwar, Gaur, etc., he came to Avandá where he had discussions with Nam Dev. Passing through Hyderabad, Amarabad, Bidar, Ginpur, Madras, Tanjore, Palamkot and other cities, he reached Setu-bandh Rameshwar where he had discussions four or five times with 'Siddhas' (Yogis having supernatural powers). From there, he crossed the ocean and landed in Ceylon where king Shiv Nábh was yearning and pining for a long time to have his Darshan like the Papihá longing intently to have a look at the moon. A brief account

concerning king Shiv Nabh is given below.

Bhai Mansukh, referred to, had already gone to Ceylon on business some time back. King Shiv Nabh was a staunch Vaishnav and all his subjects, too, were staunch followers of that faith. Bhai Mansukh's taking his bath before dawn, his reciting Guru Nanak's Shabds (hymns) thereafter, his engaging in the practice of Sumiran and Dhyān without first observing outward rites and rituals, and other such activities on his part were not to the liking of the local people who complained to the king that this Bhai Mansukh was doing irreligious things. The king thereupon called Bhai Mansukh and asked him many searching questions. The answers which Bhai Mansukh gave to his questions were on the following lines :

“O King ! This world is like a tree carrying on its top the fruit of salvation. There are two ways of getting at that fruit, one, by flying to it like a bird, and the other by reaching it at an ant's pace. He, who is fortunate enough to meet the Sat Guru, gets the fruit without much labour and toil. But it would be extremely difficult for a person who has not met the Sat Guru to obtain that fruit.

“You practise the abstinence of undertaking the ‘Ekadashi’ fast (fast on the eleventh day of each half of a lunar month) once in a fortnight. Thus, you and others have fixed only one day for shunning evil tendencies like Kam (passion), Krodh (anger), etc., as well as for eating sparingly and keeping awake. But this kind of abstinence is resorted to by Sants every day. To eat and sleep sparingly is a natural feature with Sants, and Kam, Krodh, etc., have no sway over them.

“If one bathes at night, it is all the more beneficial. The benefit of taking bath three hours before dawn is as great as that accruing from giving gold in charity. If one bathes an hour or two before dawn one derives the same benefit as that obtained on giving silver in charity. He who

takes his bath about half an hour before dawn and one who bathes early in the morning enjoys the fruits of giving, respectively one and a quarter maund (50 kg) of milk and a maund (40 kg) of water in charity. A person who takes his bath during day-time, does not derive any benefit save that of washing away dirt from his body.

“A stone idol neither eats nor drinks, nor gives instructions. There can be no hope of deriving any benefit from its worship. As far as I am concerned, I only worship my Merciful Sat Guru whose discourses, like the sun, dispel the darkness of ignorance. My Sat Guru Dayal has enabled me to taste the fruit of redemption by appraising me of the method of flying like a bird. How can I give up that method and accept such worthless practices as observance of rites and rituals, fasts, idol-worship, etc., which are no better than the ant’s method of trying to get at the fruit hanging atop? By dint of such practices only some internal purification is possible but, as far as redemption is concerned, that can be achieved only by the benign glance of the Sat Guru and His instructions. The Sat Guru, by placing His hands of mercy on my head, has graciously imprinted the ‘Tilak’ mark of Guru’s Shabd on it. I do not have to apply the Tilak mark on my fore-head again and again as you people do. I only want that my Guru Saheb’s hands of mercy may rest on my head all the time.”

On hearing such discourses from Bhai Mansukh, reverence and love were engendered in king Shiv Nabh’s heart. He asked Bhai Mansukh “Who is your Sat Guru? Let us hear from you some of his discourses.”

Reassuring the king, Mansukh thereafter recited before him some of the Bání (poetical compositions) of his Guru. The king was very much moved as soon as he heard them and, becoming beside himself with yearning and pining, and being impelled by an intense longing to have the Guru’s Darshan submitted.

“Enable me, please, to have the Guru’s Darshan. That will be doing great good to this humble fellow. Please do this quickly so that I can meet Shri Nanak, the perfect one. I shall now go with you, leaving my country and kingdom, nay, everything.

“By having Guru’s Darshan, I shall dispel all delusion and, on receiving initiation from Him, shall attain highest region. I cannot find any peace now without having the Darshan of the Great One whose discourses have pierced deep my heart.”

When Mansukh saw this condition of the king and came to know of his determination to accompany him after leaving behind his kingdom and everything else, he said “O king ! If you come with me on my journey back home, you will have Guru Saheb’s Darshan after a long time. Therefore, do not leave your country and kingdom but stay here itself and remain constantly engaged in the remembrance of the Sat Guru. He is in the know of whatever transpires within the innermost recesses of anyone and His devotees are very dear to Him. He will grant you His Darshan shortly and fulfil your heart’s desire.” The king agreed with Mansukh’s advice and, staying at home, went on repeating the Guru’s Nam. His sleep and hunger started decreasing. He became indifferent towards worldly affairs and only the Guru’s Nam and the longing to have His Darshan became the sole prop and support of his life.

Such was the king’s condition when the Guru Saheb came to Ceylon. Earlier, on hearing of the king’s love and yearning, several Sadhus and Faqirs had come to him in the garb of Nanak Saheb with a view to cheating him. But when the true sun arose, it instantly illuminated the innermost recesses of one and all. On having Nanak Saheb’s Darshan, the king was, of course, beside himself with joy and emotion. However, as the saying goes, once bitten, twice shy, the king thoroughly tested Guru Nanak applying

the criteria which Mansukh had indicated to him. Thereafter, with folded hands and in great humility, he stood before Guru Saheb and went on looking intently at His captivating form lost in love. But Guru Saheb sat with His back turned towards him and did not say a word. The king remained standing with folded hands for seven and a half hours. When Guru Saheb found that his love and faith were unflinching, He said "O King ! I hope all is well with you. Now, tell me what you want."

Full of love and with choked voice I say while singing  
Thy praise : Blessed are my life and good luck that I  
get Thy Darshan. O Lord ! Thou art aware of my  
inner feelings, O the knower of the innermost recesses  
of all ! It is not possible for me to express my inner  
feelings. No man can recognise Thee or sing Thy  
praise adequately.

After praying like this, the king fell at the Guru Saheb's feet and submitted "Regardest me as Thy slave by body, mind and wealth and be pleased to grace my home."

In this way, after impressing upon the king of Ceylon as well as his queen, ministers and subjects the greatness of Sat Nam, Guru Saheb went to Malábár and made the ruler of that place his disciple. Thereafter, while imparting instructions to the people of the various cities through which he passed on his way, he reached Nilgiri, Ratnagiri and other places and, then, returning to Sultanpur, founded a town called Kartárpur in 1512 A. D. Thus ended his second travel.

In 1513 A. D., the Guru Saheb started on his journey to Uttarákhand (northern region). The names of the places which Guru Saheb graced by his holy feet are : Nurpur, Sujanpur, Kot Kangra, Jwalamukhi Devi, Dalhousie, Dharamshala, Manikaran, Rawalsar, Nadoun, Bilaspur, Kahlur, Kirtipur, Maha Shiv Shil, Dehradun, Mussourie, Chakotra, Uttar Kashi, Yamunottari, Gangottari, Shrinagar,

Badri Narayan, Bhim Kot, Ranikhet, Almora, Nainital, Gorakhpur, Khanchi Jheel, Mansarovar, Dhavlagiri, Nepal, Sikkim, Kanchan Jangha, Bhutan and so on. Guruji returned to Kartarpur in 1516 A. D. As soon as he reached Kartarpur, seekers from all parts of Punjab flocked to him, and thousands of Hindus and Mohammedans, men as well as women, giving up fake superficial religions adopted his Saran and become worshippers of Sat Nam.

After staying in Kartarpur for sometime, Nanak Saheb started on his journey towards the western region in the company of Bálá and Mardáná. Passing through Aminabad and Wazirabad on his way, he reached Gujrat. Proceeding from there, and after giving Darshan to Sadhus as well as house-holders in Dera Ismail Khan, Dera Gazi Khan, Jampur, Shikarpur, Hyderabad (Sind), etc., he went to the port city of Karachi. Leaving Karachi and passing through Beluchistan and other places, he reached Mecca in 1518 A. D. where he slept at night with his feet stretched in the direction of Kaba. In the morning, when the attendants came there, they, in a fit of anger, caught hold of Guruji's legs and dragged him round and round in all directions but Kaba itself went on turning towards the same direction in which his holy feet happened to be pointing. Seeing this miracle, all were convinced that Nanak Saheb was a great saint. Nanak Saheb had prolonged discussions at this place with Káji Ruknuddin, Kutubuddin and others.

From there, he proceeded to Medina and had discussions with the Imám of that place and others. Thereafter, he went to Rúm and imparted instructions, known as 'Nasíhat Námá' (set of admonitions), to the Caliph there who used to be an extremely cruel person. From Rum, Guru Nanak went to Baghdad where he had discussions with several Faqirs. Then, after passing through Jalab and Dayar-Bakar and crossing the river Farat, he reached the city of Swás, from where he went to the city of Túrán in Iran where, after bringing the Hákim (administrator) round on the path of righteousness, he created a fountain which is

still there and is called "Charan Ganga" (Ganga issuing from the holy feet).

Returning from the above region, Guru Saheb reached the hill of Hasan Abdál, after having passed through Jalalabad and Peshawar. A certain Kandhari Faqir used to stay in those hills. He would not give any drinking water to Mardana in spite of the latter's repeatedly asking for it. Such was the Guru Saheb's Mauj that the Faqir's water-reservoir was itself drawn to Guru Ji. Angered by this, the Faqir threw a stone at Guruji which the latter stopped with his hands and an impression of Guruji's palm was produced on that stone. Many non-believers got tired of trying to erase that impression but it remained intact embedded in the stone. This place is known as "Panjá Saheb."

Proceeding from there, Guru Nanak returned to Sialkot after passing through Kashmir and Punachha on the way. He then went to Aminabad and then returned to Kartarpur in 1522 A. D. Some time after, he went to the Malwa region and alerted numerous Jivas to true Parmarth. After this, Guru Saheb continued to stay in Kartarpur itself and spend his days there.

Guru Nanak Saheb was so particular about punctuality and time-schedule that he would never deviate from attending to his daily routine at the appointed hour. He would invariably get up while it was still three hours before dawn and, after taking his bath and finishing his other daily routine, would sit in Dhyan at a secluded place. When Dhyan over three hours after sun-rise, he would impart instructions in spiritual matters to his disciples. Then after receiving with due courtesy and consideration those who wanted to have his Darshan, he would himself go to the kitchen to make sure that no one remained without food. He used to have the same food served to everybody. Thereafter, he would sing the praise of the Lord in solitude for some time, and then conduct Satsang where he would impart instructions in spiritual matters. Recitation of hymns and

singing of the Lord's praise over, the assembly would disperse. At night, too, the same routine was followed.

Amongst Guru Nanak's disciples in those days, Búdhá Jí and Lahná Jí were the foremost. They were the 'Guru-mukh' disciples. Between them, the status of Lahna Ji was very high, for, amongst Guru Saheb's innumerable disciples, he alone completely passed all kinds of tests involving sacrifice of the body. Because of his sacrifice of the body and recipient of full grace and mercy of Guru Saheb, he came to be known as 'Angad' as named by Guru Saheb himself.

Guru Nanak departed to his original abode on the tenth day of the dark half of Áswín in 1595 Vikram (1538 A.D.) at the age of 69 years, 10 months and 10 days. He was succeeded by Guru Angad. There is some resemblance in the stories of the departure of Guru Nanak and Kabir Saheb to their original abode. Only two planks came to the hands of the Hindu and Mohammedan disciples of Guru Nanak which were shared by the two groups and each group, in accordance with its religious custom, utilised the plank which came to its share, for the construction of a mausoleum or temple.

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### (99) D H A R A M D Á S

Dhaní Dharam Dás Jí was a Kasoundhan Baniá (trader) by caste. He was a very wealthy merchant and banker of Bándho-garh. The dates of his birth and passing away are not exactly known. But it is certain that he was younger in age than Kabir Saheb and he left his mortal coil fifteen to twenty years after the latter. From this, it can be concluded that Dharam Das Ji was born between 1418 and 1443 A.D. and he departed to his original abode near about 1543 A.D. inasmuch as he left his mortal coil at a ripe old age.

Dharam Das Ji, from his very boyhood, was highly

religious minded and given to devotion, but, in the beginning, he was a believer in traditional rites and rituals as well as idol-worship. There always used to be crowds of hundreds of Pandits, priests and Sadhus at his place and he used to spend most of his time in worshipping the deity's idol or Saligrám (pebble representing the deity), in feeding and extending hospitality to Brahmans and Pandits and in singing the Lord's praise. He had also visited many places of pilgrimage far and near.

When it was time to awaken Dharam Das Ji, Kabir Saheb first met him in Mathura and, on the way, had talks with him, in course of which he denounced idol-worship, pilgrimage and fast, and upheld the religion of Sants. Some-time afterwards, Dharam Das Ji came on a visit to Kashi, when he had Kabir Saheb's Darshan again, and whatever doubts and delusions were still lurking in Dharam Das Ji's mind were completely dispelled by Kabir Saheb then. Thereafter, Kabir Saheb initiated Dharam Das Ji in Sant Mat and, by casting his benign glance on Dharam Das Ji, opened his inner eye.

In Tulsi Saheb's book "Ghat Ramayan", it is written that Kabir Saheb went to Dharam Das Ji's place in Kashi at a time when the latter was engaged in idol-worship and many Pandits and priests had collected there. Kabir Saheb asked "What is the good of worshipping an idol made of metal and a small round stone ?" The Pandits were very much infuriated at this and, hurling many abuses at Kabir Saheb, were about to drive him away from there, but Dharam Das Ji stopped them. He had prolonged discussions with Pandits, as a result of which, they were somewhat pacified. Thereafter, Kabir Saheb, in His Mauj showed a miracle. He belched and took out from his throat a small round stone, a Saligram, and placed it before Dharam Das Ji ; thereafter, when He called it to Him, it moved on its own and sat down on Kabir Saheb's palm. When Dharam Das Ji saw this miracle, he was fully convinced of the greatness of Kabir Saheb and he made his wife and sons also fall at

Kabir Saheb's feet. His wife and elder son, Churámaní, firmly adopted Kabir Saheb's Saran and accepted Him as their Guru, but his younger son, Nárayan Das, turned up his nose and knit his eye-brows at the sight of Kabir Saheb whom he denounced as an imposter and magician.

After having adopted Kabir Saheb's Saran, Dharam Das Ji gave away with utter abandon all his wealth and property and started living at the Guru's holy feet in Kashi. After Dharam Das Ji, his son, Churamani, too, attained the same high status but Narayan Das, his other son is considered to be an incarnation of Kal according to Sant Mat.

Kabir Saheb, after departure to His original abode in 1518 A. D., was succeeded by Dharam Das Ji who obtained possession of all His (Kabir Saheb's) books. Dharam Das Ji continued to awaken Jivas and impress the greatness of Sant Mat firmly upon them for many years. After his departure from this world, he was succeeded by Churamani Ji who got possession of all his books except Kabir Saheb's "Bíjak" which was stolen by Bhágú (a fellow-disciple of Dharam Das Ji) and sent to village Dhanauli, district Tirhut, where he (Bhagu) founded a separate sect of his own.

It is said that verses in which appear the name of 'Dharam Das', invariably belong to him but other verses in which his name as well as that of Kabir Saheb appear, are also attributed to him inasmuch as he has mentioned Kabir Saheb's name in many of his verses in a spirit of love and devotion.

Some of Dharam Das Ji's Shabds (hymns) are given below.

### Shabd (1)

O Guru, God of gods ! Grantest, Thou, the gift of Bhakti. May I never be oblivious of Thy lotus feet, whose Sewa, may I always perform. (1)

I shall neither take to pilgrimage nor undertake fasts,

nor even worship in temples. I shall keep my gaze fixed on Thee alone and shall not care for anybody else. (2)

O my all-powerful Benefactor ! I do not want the eight or nine treasures, not even abode in Baikunth (heaven). (3)

Not even in dream do I hanker after wealth, property, worldly happiness, progeny, and a beautiful wife. O Guru ! I swear by Thee alone. (4)

O Lord ! Listenest, Thou, to this the prayer of Dharam Das : Grantest, Thou, Thy Darshan after removing all the curtains between Thyself and me, and makest me Thy own. (5)

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### Shabd (2)

My Sat Guru has come to me today as my honoured guest. I shall sacrifice before Him my body, mind and life. (1)

On hearing that my Sat Guru is coming, I wander hither and thither elated, beside myself with joy. (2)

I place a throne of sandal wood on which the Sat Guru takes His seat. (3)

I put a flower-garland round His neck and remain engaged in His Dhyān like the Chakor looking intently at the moon. (4)

Washing His holy feet, I drink the wash. All my sins are eradicated thereby. (5)

Lost in love and devotion, I prepare food and present it to Him in a golden plate. (6)

With folded hands, I then pray to Him "O Sat Guru,

the Ancient of ancients ! partakest, Thou, of this food.”  
(7)

When the Sat Guru is pleased to give “Prasad”, the  
Jama’s agents are vanquished. (8)

Says Dharam Das that he is now purified ; he sacrifices  
his life before Kabir Saheb. (9)

### Shabd (3)

The Sat Guru is above the caste system and He does  
not care for it. If you do not accept it, I shall give you  
proofs : He liked the fruit of the devotee Shabri who  
was a Bhíl by caste. (1)

When king Yudhisthir performed Yagya, the bell  
would not ring because of the displeasure of a  
Sant. (2)

But when the devotee Swapach put the morsel of food  
in his mouth, the bell rang loudly. (3)

Prays Dharam Das to Sat Guru with folded hands that  
may he develop love for Shabd. (4)

### (100) M Í R A B Á Í

How can one adequately describe the unparalleled love  
and unique devotion of the supremely great devotee Mírā  
Bái whose example is quoted all over India to this day ?  
She was a strange woman who gave up altogether worldly  
sense of honour and respect for family tradition, and did  
not have the slightest hesitation in drinking the cup of  
poison, knowing that it was poison, simply because it was  
offered to her in the name of “Charnámrit” (sanctified  
water). Nábhá Jí, the author of “Bhaktmál”, has composed  
the following verse in praise of her love and devotion :

In Kali Yug, he showed her love and devotion openly like the cow-herdresses of Brindaban. Utterly fearless was she. Like a lover she sang full-throated in praise of the Lord. Wicked persons, with an evil design, wanted to kill her. But nothing untoward happened to her when she drank poison taking it to be nectar. Beating the drum of Bhakti boldly and aloud she was not ashamed of anything or anybody. Giving up all worldly sense of honour and the shackles of family tradition, Mira was constantly engaged in singing the praise of Girdhar.

This supremely great devotee was the only daughter of Ráthor Ratan Singh Ji of Mertá (Jodhpur) and the granddaughter of Ráo Dúdá Jí. She was born between 1498 and 1503 A. D. in a village called Kurkí and was married in 1518 A. D. to prince Bhoj Ráj, son of Mahá Raná SÁNGÁ of the ruling Sisodiyá dynasty of Mewár (Udaipur).

The date of her departure from this world is not exactly known. From "Bhaktmál" written by Nábhá Jí, two things are known : (1) She was in correspondence with Gusain Tulsi Das Ji ; (2) on hearing of the greatness of her devotion, emperor Akbar went for her Darshan accompanied by Tán Sen, and seeing her condition charged with love and devotion, he thanked his great good fortune and was extremely happy. Akbar was born in 1542 A. D. and ascended the throne in 1556 A. D. Gusain Tulsi Das Ji was born in 1533 A. D. Bhártendú Shri Harish Chandra Ji's opinion that Mira Bai left her mortal coil between 1563 and 1573 A. D. appears to be correct. He reached this conclusion after consulting the dignitaries of the Udaipur Darbar (court) and has published it in his "Kavi Bachan Sudhá" (Nectar-like discourses of the poet).

A marriage party had come to the house of some rich person, and the ladies of the family had gone to the roof to get a view of its pomp and grandeur. At that time Mira Bai's mother had gone to have Darshan of the idol of Girdhar (Shri Krishna) which had been enshrined in the house.

Mira Bai was then three to four years old. Frolicking about, she went to her mother and asked her "Who is my bride-groom?" Her mother smiled and taking her in her lap and pointing towards the idol of Girdhari Lal Ji, said "He is your bride groom." Feeling shy in the presence of her mother, Mira Bai drew the veil over her face before her bride-groom and, instantly, she developed such intense love for Girdhari Lal Ji that not even one moment would pass without her having the Darshan of the Lord and remembering Him.

There is yet another version of the story. Once the house of her parents was visited by a certain Sadhu whose paraphernalia for worship included an idol of Girdhari Lal Ji. Mira Bai asked the name of the idol and wanted to have it from the Sadhu who, however, refused to part with it. Mira Bai took up such an obstinate attitude over the issue that, for two to three days at a stretch, she would not eat anything at all. Thereupon, her parents wanted to make the Sadhu agreeable by offering him a lot of wealth in exchange, but the Sadhu affirmed that he would on no account part with his Isht. At night, the idol warned the Sadhu in a dream saying "If you care for your own good, let me stay with that girl." The poor Sadhu took the idol of Girdhari Lal Ji to the house of Mira Bai's father as soon as it was dawn.

According to another version, Mira Bai in her previous life was one of the female devotees of Shri Krishna Chandra who, pleased with her great devotion, gave her the boon that, in Kali Yug, he would be her husband by his real form. Mira Bai has hinted this in the following couplet :

"My Beloved has come to me after many days. I am afraid of separation from Him again. Says Mira, she is attached to Him by a bond of deep love, and she has now met the Lord of her previous life".

After Mira Bai's love for Girdhari Lal Ji had become

deep and firm, her parents got her married to the son of the Ráná (king) of Chittor. A very big marriage party came. When "Bhánwrí" (a marriage ceremony in which the bride and the bride-groom jointly go round the fire) started, Mira Bai Ji went on doing "Bhanwri" with Girdhari Lal Ji. When her parents were about to bid farewell to the married couple, she could not bear her impending separation from Girdhari Lal Ji and, becoming extremely restless, wept and wept bitterly till she became unconscious. Her parents endearingly told her that everything was there for her and she could take with her whatever she liked. She said to her parents that if they wanted to save her life, they should give her the idol of Girdhari Lal Ji. As she was the darling of her parents, they readily handed over Girdhari Lal Ji to her. She placed the idol of the deity in her palanquin and with her gaze revetted on it all the way, she reached her in-laws' place.

It is said that following the traditional custom of receiving the bride from the palanquin, Mira Bai's mother-in-law first made her son worship the goddess Durgá and then asked Mira Bai to do the same. Mira Bai said that save Girdhari Lal Ji, she would not bow before anyone else. Her mother-in-law pleaded that worship of Durga confers on one a long and happy married life, and therefore Mira Bai should worship the goddess. To this Mira Bai's reply was "It is no good insisting on this matter. Whatever I have said is final." Mira Bai's mother-in-law was very much displeased to hear this and, fretting and fuming, she went to her husband and complained "This bride is no good at all. If she could affront me with her insolent reply on the very first day, heaven knows what she will do in future." Hearing this, the Rana flew into a fit of rage and was about to strike Mira Bai, but was prevented by his wife.

Within ten years of Mira Bai's marriage her husband passed away. She was not much aggrieved on this account. By applying her attention all the more to the singing of the Lord's praise, she started cultivating Bhakti enthusiastically

and adopted Rai Das Ji as her Guru, as is evident from her following couplets :

(1)

I have Sat Guru in the person of Sant Rai Das who has enabled me to recognise Surat.

(2)

I have met Guru Rai Das Ji, through whose grace, I have drunk the cup of true Gyan.

(3)

I have met the perfect Guru Rai Das, who has established my link with the highest abode.

(4)

Mira has met Govind (the Lord), and Rai Das her Guru.

When Mira Bai, after becoming a widow, started singing the Lord's praise and performing the Sewa of Sadhus constantly and without any fear or trepidation, her brother-in-law, Maha Rana Vikramá Jít, who ascended the throne of Chittor, did not like congregation of Sadhus round her. He appointed two trusted female-attendants, Champá and Chameli, whose duty was to dissuade her from the path of Parmarth and prevent her from keeping the company of Sadhus. But by Mira Bai's company, they, too, got dyed in the colour of Bhakti and turned into her helpers. The same thing happened with other attendants appointed with a view to keeping watch over her.

At the end, the Rana entrusted his own sister Údá Bāi with this difficult task, which she accomplished quite diligently for some time. She used to visit Mira Bai's apartments several times a day and tried to persuade her in all possible ways, saying, for example, "O sister-in-law ! You

are a lady belonging to a noble family. Be sensible and discriminating. Give up the company of recluses. Both the families are being scandalised by what you are doing." Mira Bai's reply would be "By Satsang, the sins and blemishes of crores of lives are eradicated. He, really, is a sinner to whom Satsang is distasteful. As far as I am concerned, Satsang is my very life."

Below are given a few verses describing Mira Bai's conversation with some of her relations.

(1)

I swear by Guru Govind that I shall not worship Gan Gaur.\*

Mira Bai's mother-in-law : Others worship Gan Gaur, and so, why not you ? All your heart's desires will be fulfilled thereby. Hence, why should you worship anyone else ? (1)

Mira : I shall worship neither Gan Gaur nor any other deity. Govind is my Beloved. What do you know of my inner feelings ? (2)

Mother-in-law : Sadhs and Sants alone love Govind from their boyhood. You are a lady of the house of Rathors.\*\* God has given you a kingdom to rule over. (3)

Mira : Let him rule who wants to rule. I am the Lord's slave. My job is to perform the Sewa of Sadhus, and my only hope is to meet Ram (the Lord). (4)

Mother-in-law : You are scandalising by your action not only the families of your parents, your in-laws and your maternal grand-father, but also all those who belong to Mertá.\*\*\* The whole world is speaking ill of you. (5)

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\* Gan Gaur=Shivas' consort, Parvati.

\*\* Rathor=Name of a tribe of Rajputs.

\*\*\* Merta=Birth place of Mira Bai.

Mira : I am neither stealing nor robbing people. I am doing nothing that is evil or wrong. I am treading the path of virtue, and have nothing to do with the world. (6)

I belong to the family of neither my parents nor my in-laws. I have nothing to do with my husband. I, Mira, have met Govind (the Lord) and my Guru Rai Das. (7)

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(2)

Údá : O sister-in-law Mira ! You have scandalised the whole family. There is a charge against you from Ídargarh.

Mira : O Uda ! There is no link between you and me. It is only because of coming to your family that I have become the victim of an accusation.

Uda : O sister-in-law Mira ! Give up the company of Sadhus. The whole city is blaming you.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! Let them speak ill of me, I do not care, I have applied my mind to the Lord.

Uda : O Mira ! Do put on a pearl-necklace and ornaments bedecked with jewels.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! I have discarded necklaces of pearls and have put on ornaments of serenity and contentment.

Uda : O Mira ! Others have noblemen as their guests, but your guests are the Sadhus and beggars.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! Go upstairs and have a look. You will like to see the congregation of Sadhus.

Uda : O sister-in-law ! Your activities have put to shame one and all, — the whole of Chittorgarh, the Rana himself and all the inhabitants and courtiers of Chittor.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! I shall bring about the salvation of the whole of Chittor, of Rana Ji, and of his courtiers.

Uda : O Mira ! You have put to shame your father and mother, and your parents' entire family in Merta.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! I shall emancipate my parents and their entire family in Merta.

Uda : O Mira ! The Rana is extremely angry with you. He has prepared poison for you in a bejewelled cup.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! Let him prepare poison for me. Taking it as Charnámrit (sanctified water), I shall drink it off.

Uda : O Mira ! One would die by the very look of that poison which is the venom of a snake called Vásak.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! I have no father or mother. The sky dropped me from above and the earth took me in her arms.

Uda : O Mira ! Rana Ji is standing at your door and is asking for your book of knowledge.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! My book of knowledge is as sharp as the sword and it is not possible for Rana Ji to follow it.

Uda : O Mira ! Do not go against what Rana Ji says. If he is angry with you, none can help you.

Mira : O Uda Bai ! The Lord Himself will come to my rescue. This is what I pray to Him.

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(3)

Uda : I am tired of forbidding you to act as you are doing. O sister-in-law ! Please do listen to what I say. The Rana is angry with you. Do not associate with Sadhus. O my sister-in-law, the whole family is getting a bad name. It is a great scandal. (1)

You wander in forests in the company of Sadhus, having lost all sense of shame. You have been born in a noble family, and it is a matter of shame that you dance clapping your hands. (2)

You have got a husband belonging to the Sisodiya family tracing its origin from the sun. What do you think, O Mira ? Give up the company of Sadhus and Girdhar, and do come with me. (3)

Mira : Mira's life and doings are not hidden from this world. O Uda Bai ! You should try to understand this, as you are noble and clever. (4)

Sadhus are my father and mother and they constitute my family. They are my friends and sympathisers. I hold fast to the Saran of the holy feet of Sants all the time. What I am saying is all true. (5)

Go and tell the Rana that I shall not do what he says. Mira's Lord is Beloved Girdhar, and she is beholden to Sants. (6)

Uda : O sister-in-law, say things after considering the pros and cons. Let me tell you that association with Sadhus is a source of pain and sorrow. Discard your 'Chhápá' (sectarial marks representing a lotus, trident, etc., delineated on the body by the worshippers of Vishnu), 'Tilak' (a sectarial mark made with coloured eye-earths, sandal wood or unguent upon the fore-head and between the eye-brows) and garland of the holy basil, and put on a costly royal necklace instead. (7)

Embellish yourself with bejewelled ornaments, and enjoy limitless pleasures. O Mira Ji ! Do come inside the royal apartments for my sake. (8)

Mira : I adorn myself with ornaments of love and devotion. Serenity and contentment are my embellishments. I put on the 'Chúnar' (coloured scarf) of love. My husband is Girdhar, O Uda Bai ! Try to understand me and go

back to your place. You yourself enjoy royal comforts and pleasures. I have nothing to do with them. (10)

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(4)

I have 'Saligrám' (Lord) on my head. What can Rana Ji do against me ? Says the Rana to Mira "O Mira ! Heed my words, give up the association of Sadhus. Your female attendants are all abashed and embarrassed at your conduct." (1)

Hearing this, Mira Says "O Rana, let me tell you, that the Sadhus are like my father and brothers. Why should my attendants be upset by my associating with them ? (2)

"You sent the cup of poison for me. Let me have it then." So saying, Mira drank the poison as if it was nectar. "May the Lord help me", said she. (3)

As Mira drank the cup of poison she said with folded hands "You, Ráná, want to kill me, but my saviour is someone else." (4)

Half of the lake is full of moss and in its other half, there is clear water. Similarly, half, or, on one side, is Mira all alone and pure like the clean water, and the other half, or, on the other side, is the Rana's army like the moss or mud in the tank. (5)

Casting off Kam (passion) and Krodh (anger) and armed with the weapon of serenity Mira, though all alone, was victorious, and the Rana's forces were vanquished. (6)

On the platform of crystal glass are seated hundreds of Sadhus amongst whom Mira dazzles with the brilliance of a million stars. (7)

The caravan of Sadhus got ready and quickly started

moving onward. Mira Bai, the woman-redeemer of the entire family, proceeded to bathe in Pushkar\* lake. (8)

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(5)

O Mira ! Now listen to and do what I say. All your friends forbid you to act as you are doing. The king, the queen, all members of the royal family, the heir-apparent to the throne and all your female attendants are forbidding you. (1)

The "Shísh Phúl" (an ornament for the head) adorns your head. The "Bindlí" (vermillion mark) shines on your forehead. You have put on the necklace round your neck, bangles round your wrists and anklets on your legs. (2)

But you have lost all sense, sitting all the time near Sadhus. You go everyday to the houses of lowly people and bring bad name to the family. (3)

You are a lady of a noble family, and yet, you go on dancing clapping your hands. You have got a husband belonging to the Sisodiyá dynasty which traces its origin from the sun and, in its brilliance, sun-like, puts other Hindus to shame. Heaven alone knows what you have in your mind now. (4)

Says Mira "I shall redeem the families of my parents, my mother's parents and my in-laws. Mira has met the Sat Guru. She sacrifices herself at His lotus feet". (5)

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( 6 )

O Rana ! I shall no longer listen to what you say. I have got Girdhári as my husband. To me, gems and camphor are of equal value, no matter if one tells me

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\* Pushkar—a blue lotus flower, a lotus. Name of a celebrated place of pilgrimage in the district of Ajmer. It is 11 km. to the north-west of Ajmer,

a thousand times that they are different. So also, gold and gravel are the same to me, as are "Mirach" (red pepper) and "Gunj" (seed of *Abrus precatorius* used as a weight), too. In other words, I make no distinction between the so-called high and low. (1)

I have adopted Saran of the unique Lord and taken the rosary in my hand for remembering His name by counting its beads. When I have applied myself to the practice of Yoga, why should I repent at all? I have found a great Guru. (2)

I am happy in the company of Sadhus and have broken off all relations with my kith and kin. You may try a crore of times to dissuade me from carrying on my activities, but I shall go by my own sense and understanding. (3)

I love Shyám (Shri Krishna) who has the bejewelled crown on his head, a beautiful necklace round his neck and anklets on the toes of his feet which ring loudly. (4)

I have cast aside all sense of shame and have made His holy feet my prop and support. Mira's Lord is beloved Girdhar. "To hell with the world," she says. (5)

When all the pleadings of Údá Báí and others did not make the slightest impression on Mira Bai, the Rana, in a fit of anger and in consultation with one of his courtiers, sent a cup of poison to her in the name of Charnamrit. Uda Bai, who was in the know of this plan, disclosed it to Mira Bai because of a soft corner in her heart for her and she wanted to dissuade her from drinking that cup of poison. Mira Bai, however, told her straightway that it would be against her vow of Bhakti to decline a thing which was offered to her in the name of Charnamrit. After touching the cup of poison with her head, she most gladly and enthusiastically drank it. While the Rana was waiting for the

news of Mira Bai's death which, he hoped, would reach him soon, the glow of refulgence on the moon-like face of Mira Bai was becoming brighter and brighter every moment. She was getting drenched more and more in the bliss of love as she sang the praise of the Lord. The verses which she sang before her Lord Girdhar at that time are given below.

## ( 1 )

O Rana ! I know you have sent poison for me. But you should know that when impure gold is heated on the crucible, pure gold comes out. (1)

I have cast aside all sense of worldly shame and honour just as one throws away water. (2)

You should try to protect the honour of your own family. I am a helpless and mad woman. (3)

The arrow from the quiver has wounded my heart where it has sunk deep, pricking all the time. (4)

I sacrifice my body and mind before all Sants and cling to Their lotus feet. (5)

Mira's Lord has taken her in His fold, knowing her to be His slave. (6)

## ( 2 )

O Rana of the Sisodiya dynasty ! Why did you send the cup of poison to me ? I have done nothing wrong and so, O Rana, why should you be angry with me ? I have only sung the praise of the Lord who has given this human body to both you and me. (1)

You have prepared the poison in a gold cup. Daya Ram Pandá (priest) brought it. Without looking this way or that way, I drank it off taking it to be Charnamrit, (2)

I was not born yesterday, O Rana ! I was there when the Brahmand was created. I was born in a family of Merta and Mira is my name. (3)

The Lord protected Prahlad's vow. Breaking open the pillar, He rushed out of it. Says Mira, O Lord, my beloved Girdhar ! Enhancest, Thou, the honour and prestige of Thy slave. (4)

Some are also of the view that Mira Bai died as a result of taking that poison, but from certain books and some verses of Mira Bai, one rather gets evidence showing that the poison, had just the opposite effect on her inasmuch as the intoxication of her love and devotion was doubly intensified. It is said that an effect of that poison was produced on Ranchhod Ji's (Shri Krishna's) idol in Dwárká, from whose mouth foam started coming out.

It is said that one day Mira Bai was singing the Lord's praise when Uda Bai came there. Mira Bai sang the following verse and cast such a benign glance on Uda Bai that she was overcome by Mira Bai's greatness and she adopted Mira Bai as her Guru.

From the time that I had the Darshan of Sri Krishna, this world as well as the other ceased to have any charm for me. (1)

The crown adorns His head just as the peacock's feather is decorated by the moons formed thereon. All the three worlds are enchanted by the saffron "Tilak" (mark) on His fore-head. (2)

The lustre of the ear-rings shines so brightly on His cheeks that even the fish and the crocodile would leave water and come to have a look at the wonderful spectacle. (3)

His curved eye-brows and the Tilak on his forehead cast a magic spell on one's mind. Lured by it, even the wag-tail (a bird), the black-bee, the fish and the deer have forgotten their young ones. (4)

Beautiful is His nose. So also is His neck which shows three lines. The Lord, in the pose of a dancer, has assumed a most captivating form. (5)

He has beautiful lips, enchantingly red eyes and a sweet smile on his face. The lustre of His teeth, like seeds of pomegranate, flashes like the lightning. (6)

Unique and most pleasing is the tinkling of the girdle of tiny bells round His waist. Mira sacrifices herself at each and every part of Girdhar's body. (7)

Thereafter, a certain woman came up before Rana and took upon herself the formidable task of setting Mira Bai right but as soon as she came to Mira Bai, such was the latter's Mauj that she turned into Mira Bai's slave and gave up going to the Rana's apartments.

A certain impostor came to Mira Bai and said "It is the order of Girdhar Lal Ji that I should give you thrill of male's company. That is why I have come here." Mira Bai replied "I take Gir Dhar Lal Ji's order on my head. But you please first have your food." Mira Bai thereafter spread a bedstead in the courtyard of the building in which a congregation of devotees was engaged in singing the Lord's praise and, after having called that impostor to her, said to him "Please do step on the bedstead now. You need not feel ashamed or afraid at all, for it behoves us to carry out the order of Gir Dhar Lal Ji in every way." That impostor became pale as soon as he heard this ; the darkness of his heart was instantly dispelled and there was illumination within him.

Once Uda Bai, in an attitude of great humility and love, insisted that Mira Bai might be pleased to enable her to have the Darshan of Gir Dhar Lal Ji openly. Seeing her true longing, Mira Bai ordered her to get all the paraphernalia for the reception of Girdhar Lal Ji ready, taking the help of Champa, Chameli and other female attendants, When food for Girdhar Lal Ji and every thing

else were ready, Mira Bai took her seat in the midst of the ladies and started singing verses charged with love and yearning. When several hours passed, and Mira Bai's yearning and restlessness became unbearable, Shri Krishna Maharaj manifested himself openly at mid-night and, taking Mira Bai in his arms, asked her "Why have you become so restless?" Thereafter, he took food with Mira Bai before all those present. Hearing a male's voice, the guards on duty awakened the king and told him that some male had entered Mira Bai's apartments with whom merriment and fun was going on. The Rana, in a fit of anger, came running with an open sword in his hand and started searching all round Mira Bai's apartment. But when he could not find any male person there, he started interrogating Mira Bai angrily. Mira Bai replied "My supreme friend and associate, Gir Dhar Lal Ji, is there before your very eyes; why are you then asking me about Him?" The king had a close look all round but he could see nobody save the women-devotees. After a little while, a highly terrifying man-lion form appeared on the bedstead, at whose very look, the king fell on the ground trembling. On regaining sense, he took to his heels saying "Our family-deity is Ekling Ji. Why do you not adopt him as your Isht? Your Isht has a most terrible form."

Even after witnessing such miracles, the king did not give up his obstinate attitude and one day he sent some snakes in a basket to Mira Bai in the name of flowers and garlands for worship. When Mira Bai opened the basket, a Saligram (a small round stone representing the deity) and a sweet-smelling garland of flowers came out of it.

When the Rana still continued to create troubles and put obstacles in Mira Bai's way of Bhakti, she got rather upset and wrote the following letter to Gusain Tulsi Das Ji :

"O Tulsi Das Ji, the repository of all happiness and the remover of pain and suffering ! I bow before Thee,

Removest, Thou, now all my grief and sorrow. All my kith and kin are creating troubles for me. They are causing me great pain as I associate with Sadhus and sing the Lord's praise. I, Mira, have loved Gir Dhar Lal from my very childhood. In no way can that be given up now, so great is that love and attraction. Thou art like my father and a source of happiness to the Lord's devotees. I pray that thou may be pleased to write to me explaining what I should do."

In reply to this letter, Tulsi Das Ji composed two verses which he sent to Mira Bai.

(1)

"Those who do not hold Ram dear, shun them all as your dire enemies, however, closely related ; Prahlad defied his father, Vibhishan deserted his brother, and Bharat forsook his mother ; nay, Bali disowned his preceptor, and the Gopis left their husbands in order to meet the Lord ; and the behaviour of them all was a source of happiness and a blessing to the world at large. It is in relation to God alone that all the kith and kin are worthy of love ; take the hint, my friend ; no more can I say. He is in every way a noble friend, worthy of your adoration, and dear to you than your very life, who can generate affection for the Lord. Such is the creed of Tulsi Das."

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(2)

"He alone is my mother, father, brother, wife, son, benefactor, near relation, friend and servant, who is the disciple of my Guru. He is as dear to Tulsi as his life itself who, after giving up all attraction of his hearth and home as well as body, is ever ready to engage in the love of the Lord. What more shall I say ?"

On getting this reply from Tulsi Das, Mira Bai determined to leave Chittor and, after ordering Uda Bai to stay on in Chittor itself, she donned an ochrecoloured cloth and left Chittor at night in the company of Champa, Chameli and other female disciples.

### Shabd (1)

O Rana Ji ! The ways of living in your kingdom are repelling. There is no Bhakti here and it is inhabited by hypocrites. (1)

I have left royal status and position and have tied my hair into locks. (2)

I have discarded jewels and pearls as also the bangles of my wrists. (3)

I have given up taking dry fruits, sugar candy, and also sugar, coarse as well as fine. (4)

And like a hero in the battle-field, never have I cared for my body. (5)

Says Mira, her Beloved, the Lord Girdhar, is her perfect husband. (6)

### Shabd (2)

O Rana Ji ! Why are you behaving as my enemy ? You regard me as a thorny bush amongst trees. (1)

I have left Marwar (state of Jodhpur), my home, as well as Mewar (state of Udaipur), Merta and your city. (2)

Your anger can do me no harm. The Lord has now showered His grace and mercy on me. (3)

Says Mira, her beloved Girdhar is her Lord. She drank the poison with a firm determination. (4)

Leaving Chittor, Mira Bai went to Merta where she was very warmly received, but there, too, there used to be some restriction with regard to the Sadhus' visiting her. A hint about this can be found in the following Shabd (hymn).

O mother ! Do not forbid me to go to have the Darshan of Sadhus. Ram's name is implanted in my heart and I am in a state of blissful self-absorption.

Says the mother "O my daughter ! what makes you so overjoyed ? At night, all sleep peacefully, but what makes you keep awake ? (1)

Says Mira, men of the world have no sense and are mad. They have no love for Ram. He, in whose heart the Lord has taken His seat, knows no sleep. (2)

Drink not the water of the tank filled with the showers of the rainy season. Long for the nectar which drips from the current issuing from the Lord. (3)

Captivating is the Lord's form ; keep looking intently at His beautiful countenance. Mira is restless and is pining because of separation from the Lord. Makest her, O Lord, Thine own. (4)

Mira Bai did not like Merta, too, and she left for Brindaban shortly after.

In Brindaban, after having had the Darshan of Sadhus and devotees on her way, she went to Jiv Gusáin Ji's place to get his Darshan. However, as she was waiting outside, Jiv Gusain Ji sent her word to the effect that he did not meet ladies. To this, Mira Bai's reply was "I had thought, in Brindaban, all were 'Sakhís' (female friends) and the only male was Gir Dhari Lal Ji. But today I know that there are other lease-holders of this Braj (Brindaban) along with the Braj Ráj (king of Braj, viz., Shri Krishna)." Hearing this, Gusain Ji felt very much ashamed and, coming outside bare-footed, took Mira Bai to his place with great courtesy and

love. After staying in Brindaban for some time, Mira Bai repaired to Dwarka where she remained blissfully engaged in the Darshan of Ranchhod Ji and the Sewa of Sadhus.

From the time that Mira Bai had left the Rana's kingdom and his city and the Lord's devotees stopped visiting those places, many catastrophies befell Rana and his men and they were faced with one calamity after another. They then realized the greatness of devotees like Mira Bai and the fact that troubles and sufferings cannot come near the places where such devotees stay. Soon on the advice of ministers, some eminent Brahmans were sent to Dwarka to bring back Mira Bai. When the Brahmans found that Mira Bai was in no mood to return, they all laid Dharná\* at her doors, vowing that they would eat or drink, only if she would agree to come with them. Mira Bai thereupon told the Brahmans that as she had found a shelter in Dwarka through the grace and mercy of Ranchhod Ji, she would like to bid him a last farewell before leaving. She then went inside and, engrossed in her love for Girdhar Lal Ji, recited the following two verses before the idol of Ranchhod Ji.

( 1 )

You have taken, O Lord, the vow to remove the pain and sorrow of your devotee. You saved the honour of Draupadi by increasing the length of her Sari (cloth). (1)

For the sake of your devotee (Prahlad), and unable to rest in peace, you assumed the form of "Nar Hari" (man-lion) and killed Hiran Kashyap. (2-3)

You saved the king elephant from drowning and took him out of the water. (4)

Says the slave Mira, wherever pain and sorrow prevails, Girdhar Lal's sympathy is there. (5)

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\* A method of appealing for justice by fasting even to the point of death while seated at the door of the offender.

( 2 )

O Lord ! Thinkest of this slave and savest her as Thou deemest proper. (1)

She has none save Thee. Grantest her Thy mercy. (2)

She has no hunger by day and sleep at night, and her body is withering every moment. (3)

Says Mira, O Lord, my beloved Girdhar ! Now that I have met Thee, may there be no separation between Thee and me hereafter. (4)

Moved by the supremely intense love of Mira Bai, the Lord, unable to keep her separated from him, had her merged in his own form. When it was getting very late, the Brahmans came there searching for her but they could not find her. Instead, they found the Sári (cloth) which Mira Bai was wearing, wrapped round the idol of the Lord in place of the yellow cloth he was clad in earlier. Mira Bai had merged in Ranchhor Ji.

Four books, "Narsi Ji's Máyrá", "Annotations of "Geet Govind", "Ram Govind", and "Rág Sorath" are attributed to Mira Bai.

Save Kabir, the writings of no other saint have met with the same poor fate as those of Mira Bai. Spurious and fake material has been grafted into her poetical compositions and people have written all kinds of nonsense in her name. While the fake verses passing as Kabir Saheb's compositions do not cause much harm to him, the innocent admirers of Mira Bai, due to their lack of understanding and sense of discrimination, have composed verses in her name which speak ill of her. These innocent admirers have depicted Mira Bai as a lady who, in her love for the Lord, was hostile to, and used harsh words at, her own husband. The fact, however, is that Mira Bai's husband, prince Bhoj Raj, never ascended the throne and assumed the title of

Rana, rather, he passed away while his father, Mahá Ráná SÁNGÁ JÍ was still alive and after Sanga Ji, Mira Bai's three brothers-in-law ascended the throne one after the other. From this, it is definite that Mira Bai cannot be called the wife of the Rana and it is impossible that Mira Bai would describe herself as the Rana's wife in her own verses. To compose verses in which the Rana is mentioned as Mira Bai's husband and in which harsh words are directed at him by Mira Bai, is simply to hurl abuses at her and call her as a woman hostile towards her husband. As a convincing proof of this is the fact that during the life-time of her husband prince Bhoj Raj, she lived with him in great peace and harmony and was never the cause of any displeasure to him. It was only when she became a widow and openly took to performing the Sewa of Sadhus and cultivating Bhakti that all the quarrels and troubles arose.

Mira Bai knew Sanskrit, too, and, as a result of associating with Sadhus coming from far and near, she could understand quite well and also write the languages of Braj (Brindaban) and the eastern region. Hence, some of the verses which are written in these languages should not be regarded as fake.

Some of Mira Bai's tender, sweet and love-charged Shabds are given below.

### Shabd (1)

Without Thy Darshan, O Lord, I find no peace even for a moment. Thou art my very life. How can I live without Thee ? Food is distasteful to me, and I know no sleep. Yearning for Thee torments me all the time. Like one wounded, I wander hither and thither, and my pain and sorrow is known to none. (1)

The day is wasted in eating, the night in sleeping, life itself in yearning and pining, and the eyes in weeping.

(2)

Oh ! were I to know this fact before  
that love entaileth such pain and sore,  
by beat of drum I'd have given a call  
that verily none should love at all. (3)

I keep my gaze fixed on the Beloved's path, sweep it  
and stand in waiting with eyes wide open. Says Mira  
'O Lord ! When, O when wilt Thou grant me Thy  
Darshan ? I shall be happy only when I meet Thee !

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### Shabd (2)

I am mad with love. No one knows my pain and  
sorrow. My bed-stead rests on the "Súli" (impaling  
stake). How can I lie down there ? The Beloved's  
bed-stead is in "Gagan" or Trikuti. How can I meet  
Him there ? (1)

An afflicted person alone knows his condition or knows  
he who has caused the affliction. A gem expert alone  
recognizes a gem expert or does he who has become a  
gem itself. (2)

Smitten by grief and sorrow, I wander aimlessly in  
forests. No physician have I met who could cure me  
of my ailments. Says Mira to her Lord that there  
will be an end to her suffering if only the physician is  
Shri Krishna himself. (3)

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### Shabd (3)

All happiness have I given up for Thy sake alone.  
Why dost Thou then tantalize me now ? (1)

Because of separation from Thee my heart aches.  
Comest Thou and removest the pain. (2)

At this stage, separation is out of question. O Lord !  
Callest me right now to Thee with a cheerful smile on  
Thy face. (3)

Says Mira "I am Thy slave for innumerable lives.  
Holdest me in Thy arms." (4)

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#### Shabd (4)

Come, O my Beloved, grantest me Thy Darshan,  
Without Thee, I cannot live. My condition is like that  
of the lotus without water and of the night without the  
moon. Day and night do I wander hither and thither,  
utterly restless, and yearning for Thee is eating  
through my vitals. (1)

I have no hunger, and no sleep. My voice fails me  
and I cannot utter a word. What more can I say ? I  
find no words to convey my feelings. The fire within  
me will be extinguished only when I meet Thee. (2)

O Omniscient Being ! Why art Thou tantalizing me ?  
Comest, O Lord, in Thy mercy, and meetest me.  
Mira, Thy slave for innumerable lives, falls at Thy  
lotus feet. (3)

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#### Shabd (5)

My eyes ache without Thy Darshan. Since I got  
separated from Thee, O Lord, never have I found  
peace. (1)

My heart trembles as I hear Thy voice. Thy words  
sound sweet to me. With fixed eyes I keep my gaze  
on Thy path. To me, it is a six-month long night of  
waiting for Thee. (2)

O Friend ! Whom shall I tell the tale of my woe ? It  
is like a saw driving through my vitals. O the Lord  
of Mira, when wilt Thou give her Thy Darshan, which  
alone will put an end to her grief and sorrow and  
grant her happiness ? (3)

## Shabd (6)

O Rana Ji ! I shall go to Girdhar's home. Girdhar is my true Beloved. I get enchanted as I behold His beautiful form. (1)

As soon as it is night, I get up and go to Him, and I come back as soon as it is dawn. Day and night, I dally with Him and I please Him in any way He is pleased. (2)

I don whatever dress He offers and eat whatever article He gives. Ancient is the love between Him and me, and without Him, I cannot live for a moment. (3)

I will sit wherever He asks me to sit, and shall readily get myself sold away, if He chooses to sell me off. This slave, Mira, sacrifices herself again and again before Girdhar. (4)

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(101) D A D U D A Y A L (Dadu, the merciful)

Dádú Dayál Jí manifested himself in Ahmedabad on a Thursday which was the eighth day of the bright half of Fágun in 1601 Vikram (1544 A. D.). His father, Lodi Ram, belonged to the Nágara Brahman caste.

It is said that once some Yogis were engaged in spiritual practices on an island. One of them had the inspiration that he should proceed to India and awaken Jivas there. While travelling that Yogi came to Ahmedabad where he met the Nagar Brahman, Lodi Ram. The latter had no son and he prayed to the Yogi that he might bless him with the gift of a son. The great Yogi told him "Come tomorrow morning on the bank of the river Sabarmati ; your desire will be fulfilled." The next morning, Lodi Ram found a child drifting away with the current, on the river. Lodi Ram took him out of the water and brought him home. According to the followers of Dadu, he was the same great Yogi,

who, by his power of Yoga, changed his body and assumed the form of the child, and later came to be known as Dadu Dayal.

When Dadu Saheb was eleven years old, the Lord gave him His Darshan in the garb of an old Sadhu while he was playing with other boys. He made the boy Dadu take a cone (packet) of betel-leaf and, after placing his hand on the boy's head, wanted to enlighten him with the secret of true Parmarth. But Dadu Ji, in a childlike mood, refused. The same old Sadhu again met him after seven years and initiated him then. From that very day, Dadu Ji became up and doing in singing praise of the Lord.

At the age of twelve, Dadu Ji left his hearth and home for the sake of Satsang. But his parents followed him and took him back home and got him married. However, worldly bondages could not tie him down and, when nineteen years old, he again left home. In the course of his travels, he reached Sámbar. To be able to remain in hiding and also earn a living, Dadu Ji took to the job of a cotton carder at this place. But how long can fire remain hidden under ashes ? One day the Káji of that place became angry with him because of a particular manner in which Dadu Ji had behaved towards him and he punished Dadu Ji on that account. Very soon, that Kaji died, after suffering a great deal. Seeing many other such miraculous feats performed by Dadu Ji, people developed great respect and regard for him, and his fame spread far and wide. Thousands of seekers and devotees started coming to him to adopt his Saran.

By performing Abhyas most assiduously for twelve years, Dadu Ji attained the status of a perfect Yogi. He always used to remain absorbed in Yoga and the bliss of Bhakti. He had attained a supernatural power by which he could forecast future but he considered it a sin to perform miracles. He used to say that activities like idol-worship, going on pilgrimage, putting on sectarial marks, listening to

religious discourses, etc., which are undertaken only with a view to gaining name and fame or putting up a show and which are devoid of true devotion, are totally meaningless and infructuous. According to him the highest form of spiritual practice was to remember the Lord, contemplate His form and engage in the Abhyas of "Sahaj Yoga" (Surat Shabd Yoga) while remaining withdrawn inward.

The attribute of forgiveness and compassion was so highly developed in Dadu Ji that people used to call him Dadu "Dayal", i. e., Dadu the merciful. Once he was engaged in Dhyān. Some jealous Brahmans shut him up within by raising brick walls round him. When, on opening his eyes, he found no way out, he again engaged in Dhyān. In this way, he remained confined within the brick-cage for several days. When some people in the neighbourhood came to know of the matter, they removed the brick walls and wanted to punish the mischief makers. Dadu Ji dissuaded them saying that those persons whose action was responsible for his remaining in touch with the holy feet of the Lord for a longer time deserved thanks rather than punishment.

Dadu Saheb was alive during the entire period of emperor Akbar's reign. Dadu Dayal met the emperor in Fatehpur Sikri in 1585 A. D. Akbar asked him what kind of body, colour, nature and existence Allah (God) has. In reply Dadu Ji said :

Love is Allah's nature,  
 Love is His body,  
 Love alone is His existence,  
 And His colour, too, is love.

Dadu Saheb remained in Sámbar for about six years. Thereafter, he went to Ámber which was the capital of Jaipur State in those days. He stayed there for about fourteen years. For the next nine years, he wandered from place to place in the states of Jaipur, Marwar, Bikaner, etc. In 1602 A. D., he finally settled down at Naráná, a place at

a distance of forty miles from Jaipur. He left his mortal coil there in 1603 A. D. For this reason that place is considered to be very holy and is regularly visited by many Sadhus.

Dadu Saheb did not choose to give his faith a sectarial form. But, partly during his own life-time and partly after his departure from this world, a certain sect owing allegiance to him came to be formed slowly and gradually. At first, this sect did not have a distinctive name of its own. Later on, Dadu Ji's disciples gave it the name "Brahm Sampradáya" (Brahm sect). But this name did not gain currency. Now-a-days, this sect is known as the "Dadu Panth" or "Dadu Sampradáya."

This sect has fiftytwo well known centres, each under a separate Mahant (religious head). Most of these centres are located in Jaipur state. Some are in states like Alwar, Marwar, Mewar and Bikaner, and some can be found in parts of Punjab, Gujrat, etc. Kashi, too, has a centre of the followers of Dadu. The chief of all the Mahants stays in Naráná where Dadu Saheb spent his last days.

Two classes of Sadhus can be found in this sect. One class consists of those who are recluses in the garb of Sadhus, who put on ochre-coloured clothes and spend all their time in studying and reciting from holy books, delivering discourses on spiritual matters, performing 'Jap' (repetition of Nam) and singing the Lord's praise. The other class of Sadhus belonging to this sect are called "Nágá", who put on white cloth and, for earning money, carry on trade and business, take to agriculture, join the armed forces, practise medicine and do such other things. The Naga regiment of Jaipur is very well known. The Sadhus of both the class, observe celibacy. By making the sons of householders their disciples, they ensure the continuity of their spiritual lineage and sect, though Dadu himself was married and had two sons and two daughters.

Unlike the followers of Kabir, the Sadhus of the Dadu

sect neither apply 'Tilak' to their fore-head nor do they put on 'Kanthi' (necklace made of several strands of strings) round their neck, but usually, they keep a 'Sumarni' (cloth-bag) in their hands as an aid to the practice of Sumiran (repetition of Nam). These Sadhus put on a Topá (a kind of cap which covers the ears and the back of the head) and say "Satta Ram" when they meet or bid farewell to each other.

In Naráná, the head-quarters of the Dadu sect, there is a worth-seeing temple called "Dadu Dwará". Here, one can still find remains of Dadu Dayal's residence as well as his seat. The dresses he used to wear and also some of his books are also preserved here. They are worshipped by Dadu Saheb's followers. In Narana, a Melá (congregation) is held every year for ten days, from the fourth to the twelfth day of the bright half of Fágun.

Dadu Saheb did not have much formal education, though in the verses and couplets composed by him, one can find words of various languages, and many of his verses and couplets are in pure Persian. Gujrati was, of course, his mother tongue, and since he stayed in Marwar for a long time, it is not at all surprising that he should know the languages of that region, but, strikingly enough, one notices a sound knowledge of Punjabi, Sindhi, Maharashtrian and also "Brij Bháshá" (language of Braj or Brindaban) in his works. Dadu Saheb never wrote his Bani in his own handwriting. His disciples staying with him used to write down whatever verses or couplets came out of his mouth. Some of his Sákhí (couplets) are given below.

He, who understands things when explained to him, is a human being. He who understands from hints, is a Sadh. Says Dadu, he who knows what is in others' mind is a god. As for Dadu, he is inaccessible and unfathomable. (1)

Says Dadu to his disciple "My tongue is tired of explaining things to you, and your ears have become

tired of listening to me.” Alas ! What can the Sat Guru do, if the disciple is ignorant and foolish ? (2)

The whole world is entangled in self-created ties. If you yourself break all the bondages, you will be free from this world. This is the teaching of a true Guru. (3)

The whole world will be your companion when you are affluent and happy. But none will give you company when you are in misery. Says Dadu, the Lord and Satguru alone is one's true companion in pain and sorrow. (4)

My friends and companions are the Sadhs and on my head is the Creator. Says Dadu, Sat-Guru is the only true companion. All else are sources of darkness and evil. (5)

Says Dadu, adopt the Name of the Beloved, then only will you be able to vanquish Kal. You may have to leave this world any moment and little do you know how tomorrow will come to you. (6)

Says Dadu, why do you mix up with sand the precious commodity, viz., life itself, whose one breath even is as valuable as the fourteen Loks. (7)

Make your life fruitful by singing the praise of the Lord and doing good to others. Says Dadu, it is better to die at a place where one's dead body can be eaten by birds and beasts. (8)

All are happy and there is no one who is unhappy. Dadu, the Lord's slave, is alone unhappy, and he has not even a wink of sleep. (9)

The Lord saith not a word, and His slave wanders hither and thither distracted and miserable. With heart aching for this reason, the slave, Dadu, remains unhappy. (10)

Without the Beloved, each moment seems to be an age. How can one pass the hard days of misery ? Without Nam, Dadu is unhappy. Kal is devouring all forms and figures. (11)

Says Dadu, in the whole world, none is miserable and unhappy like me. Yearning to meet the Beloved, I weep with tears flowing from my eyes in torrents. (12)

Neither does the Beloved meet me, nor am I at all happy. How, indeed, can I live ? He alone is my cure who has wounded my heart. (13)

So long as my Surat does not withdraw and my mind does not become steady I cannot meet the Beloved. This is my wretched predicament. (14)

I am a beggar for the sake of Thy Darshan, O Lord. Thou art a great benefactor and remover of all pain and misery. Vouchsafest unto me Thy protection. (15)

Says Dadu, this slave of the Lord performs His Sewa but is afraid that he cannot do anything worthwhile. No one knows O Lord, how to perform Thy devotion and service which would be worthy of Thee. (16)

"Nothing have I been able to do that would please the Lord, and in vain did I come to this world," says Dadu. (17)

How can one smile when one's precious human life is being wasted ? One has only to weep and lament. (18)

Nobody enshrines the Lord in his heart though everybody owes his life to Him. Says Dadu, "Fie on life in Kali Yug without the Bhakti of Guru." (19)

One's mind may be dead and vanquished, and one may have controlled one's senses, yet, one should never mix with wealth and woman. (20)

Says Dadu, there are many stupid fellows who take to

Sewa motivated with some worldly desire, and beg for the fruits of their labour. (21)

Such people are rare in the world who in body and mind remain absorbed in the Creator and do not hanker after anything worldly. (22)

Nobody has ever died by drinking nectar, so also, no evil can befall one treading the path of virtue. (23)

The Lord belongs to one who is wholly dedicated to Him. Says Dadu, this is something which the anchorite will never understand and appreciate. (24)

It is my great good fortune that I could get Darshan of Sadhs, says Dadu. I have drunk the elixir of Nam to my fill, what harm can Jam and Kal do to me ? (25)

The thought of heaven or hell does not worry me, nor have I any fear of life and death. But the day that elapses without my repeating Nam torments me. (26)

What the Lord ordained, happened, and what He wills, shall happen, too. Since only what the Creator dispenses, happens, why should anyone worry ? (27)

Says Dadu, He alone is my Lord (Beloved) who satisfies everybody and in whose hands, the life and death of everyone depend. (28)

Guru thinks of everybody. He is omnipotent and omniscient. Take His Nam with care and attention and do not allow other thoughts to disturb you. (29)

Nothing has ever been achieved by thinking and worrying. Thoughts and worries eat through the Jiva's vitals. What was to happen, is happening and who is to depart from this world, will depart. (30)

The omnipotent companion, who made the mother's milk available to the Jiva in his inverted position whilst in the mother's womb and protected his tender

body from the heat and fire prevailing there, remains constantly with the Jiva in his pain and misery at all centres within him. O my mind, cling fast to that benevolent Lord and do not forget him even for a moment. (31-32)

Says Dadu, the giver of your daily bread is ever ready to offer you your share. The perfect giver of gifts is always with you. (33)

Enshrine the Lord's name in your heart with faith. Says Dadu, the all powerful Lord fulfills the hopes of everybody. (34)

I would welcome calamity and misfortune only if I can keep company with Guru. Bodily pain is a test of one's sincerity. Dadu says, of what use are the riches and comforts of the world without Nam ? (35)

The Lord alone does everything, but He allows others have the credit. He lends lustre to the name of His devotee, Himself remaining in the background. (36)

Says Dadu, that Nam ever remains over his head as his protector. Numerous enemies had failed to do him any harm. (37)

If the Lord protects you, none can cause you any harm. Even if the whole world turns your enemy, not a hair of your body will be bent. (38)

Sat Guru is like a sandal-wood tree which remains entwined by snakes. If like the snakes the devotees of the Sat Guru do not discard their poison, how can Satsang benefit them ? (39)

Every particle of my being is guilty before Thee and I am out and out dishonest. Every moment, I commit sin. Pardon me, O Lord, for my sins. (40)

Thou alone art my saviour while there are many ready

to kill me. Says Dadu, "I have none else, O Lord, to protect me. Thou savest me Thyself." (41)

A married woman never utters the name of her husband. Nevertheless, for his sake, she sacrifices her body and mind. (42)

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Some of the Shabds of Dadu Saheb are given below :

### Shabd (1)

You are my Lord, and I am your slave. Whether you kill me by putting my head under an executioner's axe, or you drive the saw on my head, or You chop off my neck with a sword, or You push me down from the sky, or mountain, or You drown me in a river, or You light a fire around me, or You allow Kal to devour me from all ten sides, or You may test me on the touch-stone, I accept and submit to all these cheerfully. (1-4)

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### Shabd (2)

O my mind, catch hold of Guru's holy feet. In them, you have your imperishable abode. When you get the dust of Guru's lotus feet, the snake-like Kal will run away. The three kinds of worldly afflictions will then vanish, and you will enjoy inestimable happiness. (1)

If you can apply your attention to Guru's lotus feet, death cannot take its seat on your head, the sway of recurrent births and deaths on you will slacken and you will enshrine in your heart the Holy Feet. (2)

When the Jiva partakes of the bliss of the Holy Feet, Maya cannot cast her spell on him, he is rid of delusions, Karmas and worldly interests, and the three worlds become subordinate to him. (3)

If you engender love for Guru's lotus feet, all the four treasures, viz., 'Dharma' (Parmarth), 'Arth' (wealth), 'Kam' (fulfilment of desires) and 'Moksh' (emancipation), will be your slaves. You will not hanker after anything else when your mind applies to the true Guru. (4)

### Shabd (3)

Your last moment has come, and that is why all have turned your aliens. The day has come when your ears do not hear, your eyes do not see and your tongue cannot utter a word. Your head shakes and your hands and legs start trembling. (1)

Your black hair has turned gray. Your physical and mental strength has vanished. Your youth is gone and old age has overtaken you, and you have started repenting. (2)

Your splendour is dwindling and your body withering away. This body of yours has become old and worn out. Your five senses have slackened and ceased to obey you. Even then, you have not acquainted yourself with the secrets of the Lord. (3)

The traveller, Hans, that is, the Jiva or soul or life, is about to leave. You should think of your predicament. Says Dadu that though Kal is devouring the Jiva as each day passes, he still does not come to his senses. (4)

### Shabd (4)

It is strange that this obdurate life of mine has not yet left the body. O my handsome Beloved ! (1)

Many a day has passed without my having Your

Darshan. The four Pahar or quarters of the night, appearing to be as long as four ages, have passed and the day has broken. (2)

My life-span is exhausted, but you have not come even to this day. O captivator of my heart ! Where have you been dwelling ? (3)

These eyes have never seen You, though all this time I have kept my gaze fixed on Your path. (4)

Says Dadu, he is restless and overcome with yearning for the Beloved just as the Chakor is for the moon. (5)

### (102) H A R I D A S J I

Swami Harí Dás Jí was a disciple of Shri Ású Dhír Jí of the Nimbárk sect. He was born near about 1480 A. D. in a Brahman family of village Rajapur situated at a distance of one mile from Brindaban. The name of his father was Gangadhar and that of his mother Chitra Devi. He was an utterly self-denying Mahatma and was the crown-jewel of all the loving devotees of the Lord. So great was his Bhakti that kings from far and wide would be at his door to have his Darshan, and would go back after waiting for hours. He would never accept anything offered to him as Bhet. It is said that one day a certain banker of Kannauj brought a bottle of some fine scent for offering it as Bhet to Soami Ji. The latter overturned the bottle and poured the scent on the ground. On being asked what made him do that, he said to the banker "I was playing Holi with the Lord to-day. You brought the scent at a very opportune moment. See, it has been put to excellent use. I have poured it on the person of the Lord, and not on the ground. If you do not believe me, go and verify yourself." On going to the temple, the banker actually found Shri Bihárá Jí's dress drenched in the scent.

He used to stay in a small hut in "Nidhu Ban" on the

bank of the river Yamuna. As for dress, he used to have with him just a rag and nothing else; and as for utensils, he had only one earthen pot with a clay pipe. It is said that he used to make bread of oat-flour without using any pan, and by roasting the dough on fire prepared by burning cow-dung cakes. After having offered Bhog (food) to his Isht, he used to distribute three quarters of the bread and would himself partake of the remaining one quarter. He was a life-long Brahmchari (celebate). He used to sing the Lord's praise inside his hut while playing on the harp. It is said that the Lord Krishna would come to his hut and listen to his Bhajan (recital of hymns). On many occasions people were at their wit's end to see dazzling light inside the hut.

Hari Das Ji was the guru of the famous singer Tan Sen. Once the emperor Akbar came with Tan Sen in the garb of a Sadhu with a Tánpúra (a stringed musical instrument) in hand with a view to listening to his devotional songs and having his Darshan. So sweetly did Hari Das Ji sing that all those who were listening to his song got lost in the bliss of the Lord's Darshan. On returning to his camp, the emperor asked Tan Sen to sing the same verse, but the bliss which he had experienced from Hari Das Ji's song could not be found in Tan Sen's rendering. The emperor asked Tan Sen what the reason could be. Tan Sen's reply was, "Hari Das Ji was singing before One who is the Lord and sustainer of all, whereas I am singing before you." The emperor agreed with Tan Sen. Hari Das Ji would not accept any offering from the emperor in spite of the latter's fervent prayers. The emperor then fell at Hari Das Ji's feet and prayed that though he was undoubtedly unfit to render any worthwhile Sewa to Hari Das Ji, yet, his heart's desire would be fulfilled and he would consider himself extremely fortunate if Hari Das Ji would be kind enough to order him to do even some minor Sewa for him. Thereupon Hari Das Ji said "First, go on sending regularly some gram for the monkeys ; secondly, see to it that no one

cuts any green tree or branches of trees in Braj (Brindaban) ; and thirdly, you should never come to me again.” The emperor obeyed these orders.

Swami Hari Das Ji was the founder of the “Tatti Sansthán” under the Nimbark sect. He stayed in ‘Nidhiban’ till 1575 A. D. His Samadh can still be found in ‘Nidhiban’. Three or four collections of his verses (in Hindi) are available under the titles of “Hari Das Ji Ka Granth” (Book written by Hari Das Ji), “Swami Hari Das Ji Ke Pad” (Swami Hari Das Ji’s verses), “Hari Das Ji Ki Bani” (Poetical compositions of Hari Das Ji), etc. His verses are soaked through and through with love and bliss. A few of them are given below.

### Shabd (1)

Partake of the supreme bliss, O my mind ! Shun worldly rites and rituals, and constantly sing the praise of Lord Bihári (Shri Krishna). (1)

Leave family and home, forsake woman and wealth, and engage in the repetition of the name of the benign Shyam (Shri Krishna). Says Hari Das that if you follow the methods prescribed by Sants, you will become fit to attain Their region. (2)

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### Shabd (2)

Why are you sloth-ful in repeating the name of the Lord ? Kal is all the time aiming his arrow at you. What, really, will you gain by gathering lots of diamonds and other gems, and tethering an elephant at your door ? (1)

No one knows when Kal will strike you. Says Hari Das, nothing will be of any avail to you when the dust-storm overtakes you at the end. (2)

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Shabd (3)

You have not sung the Lord's praise sincerely and after giving up all sense of worldly honour and shame, nor have you attended any congregation of Sadhs and received Prasad. (1)

You did not rush to the groves of the Brindaban forests, nor have you taken the refuge of Shri Krishna. (2)

And not even for a moment did you feel elated by having a look at the captivating form of Sri Krishna, nor have you prostrated yourself before the threshold of his palace, bowing your head. (3)

Says Hari Das, you are not at all ashamed though you have wasted your life and earned nothing ever since you were born. (4)

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(103) R A J J A B

He was a disciple of Dadu Dayal and was born near about 1561 A. D. When, in connection with his marriage, he went to Amber which was the capital of the then princely state of Jaipur, Dadu Ji was also staying there. When the marriage party proceeding with great pomp and grandeur, came near Dadu Saheb's hermitage, Dadu Ji, on seeing the groom seated on a horse, said :

O Rajjab ! You have done a 'Gajjab' (a horrible blunder) by putting on a groom's crown on your head. You came to this world to sing the Lord's praise, but you are paving your way to hell.

Rajjab Ji alighted from the horse and took his seat by Dadu Dayal's side. The marriage party also halted. After a while, the members of the party asked Rajjab Ji to get up and hurry up as the auspicious moment for the marriage

was drawing near. Rajjab Ji, thereupon, took off the groom's crown from his head and, placing it before his younger brother, told him "You please go and marry". Hearing this, the members of the marriage party became very angry, and hurling abuses at Dadu Ji, accused him of casting a magic spell on Rajjab Ji. When they started tormenting Dadu Ji very much, he told Rajjab Ji "Brother ! Go and marry, for otherwise, you will cast an evil eye on other women" Rajjab Ji thereupon said

Rajjab refuses to have his own wife. Other women have no charm for him. After having discarded its own scale, whose scale is the snake going to put on ?

Dadu Ji kept mum thereafter. Rajjab Ji stuck to his decision not to proceed further with the members of the marriage party in spite of their best efforts and persuasions. He became Dadu Ji's disciple and started staying with him.

Rajjab Ji was very much devoted to his Guru. Once Dadu Saheb accompanied by some of his disciples was going to a certain place. On their way, fell a river which was full of mud. Dadu Ji asked his disciples to put some stones on the river-bed at a short distance from each other so that by stepping on them they could readily get across. The other disciples ran to collect stones but Rajjab Ji lay prostrate on the mud and said to his Guru "Why should stones be needed at all ? You kindly get across walking over my body." There are many other well-known stories illustrating his Guru Bhakti.

His Bani or poetical compositions are known as "Rajjab Bani." They are 10013 in number, consisting of couplets, verses, poems, etc., and are divided in 294 chapters. A few of his Sakhís (couplets) are given below.

Says Rajjab that on listening to the Lord's praise, the sins, the senses, the three Gunas and the five thieves, that is, the five evil tendencies, run away, the way the snake leaves the sandal-wood tree on hearing the peacock.

crowing on the tree-top. (1)

Says Rajjab that sin keeps away from one who performs the repetition of Nam like birds leaving trees on hearing the booming of a gun. (2)

A mountain of hoar-frost melts by the heat of the sun's rays. Says Rajjab that by the repetition of Guru's Nam, sin is also eradicated in like manner. (3)

Says Rajjab that before the sun of Sumiran, dark Maya, the stars of the three Gunas, the bitter cold of delusion and the moon of the mind all fade away. (4)

One day Rajjab Ji was going with his disciples to the place of a certain house-holder to have dinner there. On his way, he met a Brahman who had on him a dirty and tattered cloth. He said to Rajjab Ji that he was very hungry. Rajjab Ji told him "Come along with us, we are actually going to have food." When people sat in rows for the dinner, the Sadhus would not allow the Brahman in tattered and dirty clothes to sit near them. That poor fellow took his seat at a distance. Seeing this, Rajjab Ji could understand that it was those Sadhus who had made him sit at a distance from them. If, on that account, food was not properly served to him, he would remain hungry. Thus thinking, Rajjab Ji made that Brahman sit near him. This was not to the liking of the Sadhus. They, of course, did not say anything to Rajjab Ji there, but on the way, they told him "By making him sit near you, were you not thinking of making him your successor? He could have easily taken his food at the place where he was originally sitting." Rajjab Ji did not say a word but thought that those people were all puffed up with pride, and were not fit for succeeding him, and so, he would make that very poor Brahman his successor. When his disciples were away, he got the Brahman seated on his throne. When his disciples saw this, they murmured "It is strange that Maharaj (Guru Ji) should choose to give this poor Brahman the right to sit on his throne." Hearing this, Rajjab Ji thought that wealth begets pride and is detrimental

to one's performing devotion to the Lord. He therefore cursed his throne saying that anyone who sits on it will ever remain poor.

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### (104) MUJADDID ALIF SÁNÍ

Hazrat Shekh Mujaddid Alif Sání Sarhandi was an inhabitant of Afghanistan and was born in 1563 A. D. He performed spiritual practices most assiduously for a very long time. He used to tell the blunt truth in the clearest possible terms and, against everything evil, his sharp tongue would act like a dagger. When out to speak, he would say nothing but pure and unalloyed truth and would not spare or favour anybody. The true state of affairs would be laid bare by him before one and all. He would go on explaining things using cut and dried expressions.

The literal meaning of 'Mujaddid Alif Sani' is as follows : Mujaddid=creator, one who creates ; Alif=Allah, God ; Sání=second, another. Because of this, the Ulmá (learned men, sophists) of his time, in very large numbers, became antagonised against him. His clear-cut and forthright statements made even many Maulvis, Faqirs and Sufis hostile towards him. The Shias became his arch enemies. At the instigation of Shias, even empress Nur Jahan became antagonised against him. By emperor Jahangir's order, he was summoned to his Darbar (court). Discussions started in which the emperor himself also took part. The discussions soon tended to become bitter and acrimonious. The emperor got angry and Mujaddid Alif Sani was imprisoned in the Gwalior fort. For full two years, he remained in jail. Ultimately, truth and sincerity prevailed. The emperor called Mujaddid Alif Sani to him, begged for his forgiveness and, after setting him free from jail, kept him in his royal apartments. The emperor even made prince Khurram (Shahjahán) his disciple. All the nobles and high officials also became

his disciples. Many miraculous feats stand to his credit.

Mujaddid Alif Sani was born during the reign of Akbar and the sad event of his passing away took place during Jahangir's reign. At the time of his death, he was sixty-four years old. His mausoleum can be found in Sarhand Sharif.

Somebody had asked him "You are such a learned and scholarly person, a saint and a perfect Faqir, and yet you had to go to jail ; what could be the reason ?" His reply was "It is all due to my bad manners and the ill-luck of my activities, nothing else. There must have been some lapses on my part in singing the praises of the Lord and, sometime or other, pride might have taken possession of my heart. I had to suffer punishment for all these, and I have done that. And so, you, too should try to avoid such lapses."

He has said that association with persons of worldly or intellectual knowledge is a deadly poison and a bone of contention. One should not pin one's hopes on a learned person who will resort to dishonest means to serve his own interests.

According to one of his couplets, a learned man engrossed in power and pelf and in activities of promoting his worldly interest, is himself lost and is oblivious of the Lord. How can such a person show the true path to others ?

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### (105) B Á B Á L Á L D A Y Á L J Í

There is a famous Math (temple, monastery) called Darbar Shri Dhyampur at a distance of about ten miles from Batálá station in the district of Gurudaspur in Punjab. This Math was founded by Bábá Lál Dayál Jí. He was born on the second day of the bright half of Mágh in 1412 Vikram (1355 A. D.) in a wellknown Khshatriya family of village

Kushpur (Kusur). The name of his father was Bhola Nath and that of his mother Krishna Devi.

As a boy, he had razor-sharp intelligence. He finished studying all the scriptures at the age of eight. When ten years old, he received Prasad from a certain Mahatma, as a result of which, a feeling of intense renunciation was aroused in him. In this condition of utter renunciation, he wandered from place to place but could not find what he was looking for. At last, he returned home disappointed and started putting questions to his father as to how one could attain God. His father tried his best to divert him from his mood of renunciation and engage him in worldly pursuits, but in spite of the persistent pleading of his father, he remained firm in his faith.

After spending some time at home, he again left in search for Sat Guru. This time, he luckily met on the bank of the river Iráwadí, near Sháh Dará Láhore, the same Mahatma whose Prasad had awakened a sense of renunciation in him. His name was Swami Chaitanya Dev. After receiving initiation from him, Lal Dayal Ji stayed with him for a long time. To test Lal Dayal Ji, Swami Chaitanya Dev conferred on him several supernatural powers, e. g., flying freely in the sky, vanishing and then appearing again, reviving a dead person, and so on. But Lal Dayal Ji used to regard such supernatural powers as utterly insignificant and of a very low order, for, how could a thirst for true Parmarth be quenched by them ? Thus, finding Lal Dayal Ji an Adhikari (spiritually fit) Jiva, Swami Chaitanya Dev gave him Brahm Gyan (knowledge or secret of Brahm).

After having initiated Lal Dayal Ji in Brahm Gyan, the Guru Ji disappeared. It is said that at that time a voice from heaven was heard :

Now you have realized Atma, i. e., Surat. Make a gift of your knowledge to devotees. Teach and preach Karma (virtuous deed), Bhakti (devotion) and Gyan (true knowledge). Emancipate all fallen Jivas,

Apart from Punjab, Lal Dayal Ji travelled through Kabul, Gazni, Peshawar, Surat, Delhi, Kandhar, etc., preaching people the path of Bhakti (devotion). It is said that being an accomplished Yogi, he was able to maintain his body up to three hundred years by going through a process of rejuvenation and, finally, on the tenth day of the bright half of Kartik in 1712 Vikram (1665 A.D.), he merged in Brahm in Shri Dhyampur. His Samadh can be still found in Shri Dhyampur where a big Mela (congregation) is held every year on the tenth day of Vaisakh and on the Vijaya Dashmi day.

A few examples of his Bani are given below.

A person having faith in Brahm, no matter whether he adopts a vow of silence or sings his Isht's praise, always remains in a state of intoxication, and his Surat is absorbed in the bliss of Shabd. He neither remains attached to family and home, nor does he wander in forests. Says Lal Dayal, such a person enjoys the bliss of Átmá. (1)

By cherishing hopes of worldly pleasures, which are sheer perversions, the whole world is going round and round in the cycle of eightyfour. (2)

There is no such endless wandering for a person who entertains no worldly hopes and keeps himself uncontaminated, that is, aloof from the world. He is above 'Páp and Punya' (vice and virtue). (3)

Within the body is breath and within breath is life, and within life are embedded worldly hopes and desires, and so, how can one meet the Beloved? (4)

The Hindu swears by Hari Har and the Mohammedan by Khuda. If one meets the Sat Guru, all one's doubts will be dispelled. (5)

He, within whom lurk desires, may perform Dhyán outwardly, nevertheless, he will not be able to meet the Lord, and will suffer at the end. (6)

When prince Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of emperor Shah Jahan came to know of Baba Lal Dayal Jí's teachings and instructions, he became restless for meeting the latter. On receiving prince Dara's affectionate letter of invitation, Baba Lal Dayal Jí himself went to Lahore to meet the prince. Many congregations were held there. Baba Lal Dayal Jí made a profound impression on Dara. Between Dara and Baba Lal Dayal Jí, there were many questions and answers.

These questions and answers are in Persian. Ordinary people cannot understand them from the original. An Urdu translation has also been published but it is full of serious mistakes. For these reasons, a translation of the questions and answers in simple Hindi was prepared so that the general public could derive benefit from those discussions which are truly of a very high order. The following is an English translation of that Hindi version.

The questions have been put by Dárá Shikoh and the answers have been given by Baba Lal Dayal Jí :

Question 1—What are the beginning and the end of a Faqir ?

Answer—His beginning is a state of non-existence and his end is immortality.

Question 2—Wherein lies the greatness of a Faqir ?

Answer—In bowing before others, that is, in maintaining an attitude of humility.

Question 3—What constitutes the sagacity of a Faqir ?

Answer—His intelligence lies in engendering love for the Lord and in developing attachment for none else.

Question 4—Wherein lies the strength of a Faqir ?

Answer—In giving up his own strength and reliance on personal efforts, and in reposing trust in the strength of the Lord in an attitude of abject humility.

Question 5—What is there over the head of a Faqir ?

Answer—The Lord's protection.

Question 6—What is there before everybody ?

Answer— His daily bread.

Question 7—What follows everybody ?

Answer—Death.

Question 8—What is a Faqir mindful of ?

Answer—He is mindful of his Guru's Sewa.

Question 9—What doubt lurks in a Faqir's mind ?

Answer—The doubt as to whether his worship will be accepted by the Lord or not.

Question 10—What should a Faqir do ?

Answer—Not to allow sleep and slothfulness to overtake him.

Question 11—What does a Faqir fight shy of ?

Answer—Eating too much.

Question 12—What constitutes a Faqir's alertness ?

Answer—Eating and drinking moderately and with care.

Question 13—What should a Faqir's ears and tongue be like ?

Answer—His ears should be given to hearing the Lord's praise and his tongue should not engage in useless talks.

Question 14—What kind of an effort does a Faqir make ?

Answer—He sees to it that he remembers the Lord at every breath and never forgets Him.

Question 15—Where is the Faqir's abode ?

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Answer—In the Lord's region.

Question 16—Where is the Lord's region ?

Answer—The Lord's Name is His region.

Question 17—What does a Faqir drink ?

Answer—The cup of love.

Question 18—What are the lamps in a Faqir's home ?

Answer—The sun and the moon.

Question 19—On what kind of floor does a Faqir take his seat and lie down ?

Answer—The bare ground.

Question 20—What should a Faqir be doing constantly ?

Answer—Practising humility and remaining thankful.

Question 21—What does a Faqir long for ?

Answer—To reach a stage such that his Beloved remains at his side all the time, and he becomes independent of all worldly relations at heart.

Question 22—In what matter is a Faqir particularly careful ?

Answer—In strengthening his faith and belief and in remaining firm in them.

Question 23—What kind of a person should be praised ?

Answer—One whose actions are good.

Question 24—What activity is useless ?

Answer—Brooding over the past and calculating about the future.

Question 25—Amongst the various intoxicants, which is the best and is such that one is intoxicated by it, but it produces no languor or after-effects ?

Answer—The intoxication of Gyan (knowledge) and that of keeping awake at night.

Question 26—What do you think of wine ?

Answer—It makes one desolate.

Question 27—What about hemp ?

Answer—It spoils one's honour and prestige.

Question 28—How is poppy-head (an infusion of the poppy) ?

Answer—It is good for nothing.

Question 29—How about opium ?

Answer—It, too, is distasteful to the lovers of Lord as well as those who keep awake at night.

Question 30—And how is "Májún"\* ?

Answer—It is also not good for Faqirs.

Question 31—There must be some intoxicant suitable for Faqirs.

Answer—To Faqirs, the contemplation of the Lord's form is itself intoxicating. It is a source of peace and keeps one cheerful. It keeps one's brain full of fragrance and fresh.

Question 32—What about tobacco ?

Answer—It fills the brain with smoke.

Question 33—In the practice of Yoga, withholding of breath has been deemed proper.

Answer—In the sense that one draws the breath and then

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\* A drug or drugs mixed up with honey, or inspissated juice or syrup, and generally containing opium, or hemp, or some other intoxicating ingredient.

retains it. This is called Kumbhak. Retention of breath without any discomfort is called Púrak. And Rechak consists in exhaling at will.

Question 34—What is meant by “Dil-Kushi” or vanquishing the mind ?

Answer—“Dil-Kushi” consists in concentrating the “Dil” or mind after having withdrawn it from all directions and then applying it to the Lord. “Dam Kashi” (holding the breath) and “Dil Kushi” are called, respectively, “Prán Yog” and “Sánkhyā Yog”.

Question 35—Are both these methods enjoined and practised now ?

Answer—Both these methods were in vogue before the advent of Kali Yug. Now, “Sankhya Yog” or “Dil Kushi” is enjoined.

Question 36—What is wrong with “Dam Kashi” (Pranayam) that it is not prescribed ?

Answer—The life span of a Jiva is now not long enough keeping in view the time required for attaining the object (goal) of Dam Kashi. To achieve this object, one has to spend three hundred twentyfive years in this kind of Abhyas. During this period, one has to remain in the company of the Guru and then only can one derive benefit. The six “Chakras” or centres can be conquered only then. There is a danger of many obstacles cropping up in this Abhyas. Even if one averts them, one suffers a lot. Besides, at the present time, the life-span of the Jiva is very short. Whoever tried to perform this Abhyas out of obstinacy, contracted some serious disease.

Question 37—What makes a Faqir sad ?

Answer—Publicity of his spiritual attainments.

Question 38—Wherein lies the happiness of a Faqir ?

Answer—In leading a moderate life.

Question 39—Wherein lies the “Salámatí” or safety or protection of a Faqir ?

Answer—In befriending self-calumniation.

Question 40—What medicine does a Faqir have for the afflicted ?

Answer—Prayer to the Lord for the amelioration of their sufferings.

Question 41—How can the purpose or object of a Faqir be fulfilled ?

Answer—By having no purpose or object at all.

Question 42—Is it proper for a Faqir to beg for anything ?

Answer—It is proper only when absolutely necessary and when the object is to remove the pain and suffering of others.

Question 43—What constitutes the disgrace of a Faqir ?

Answer—To get involved in worldly matters.

Question 44—What is to the liking of a Faqir ?

Answer—Not to get entangled in worldly matters and court trouble thereby.

Question 45—What is the doctrine of Faqirs ?

Answer—To mould their conduct in accordance with their Guru’s command.

Question 46—Who is the enemy of a Faqir ?

Answer—His own mind.

Question 47—What is the gift from a Faqir ?

Answer—Allowing others to join and attend his Satsang.

Question 48—What instruction is given by a Faqir ?

Answer—To keep away from mischief and not to complain against others' faults and mistakes.

Question 49—What mercy and protection does a Faqir grant ?

Answer—To bless others without any element of hypocrisy.

Question 50—What constitutes the greatness of a Faqir ?

Answer—Not to disown one whom he has once lent a helping hand, that is, to continue to extend a helping hand to that person and give him his support.

Question 51—What is meant by a Faqir's "Dastgíri" (lending a helping hand to others) ?

Answer—To make one whom he has lent his helping hand like himself.

Question 52—What are the ways of a Faqir ?

Answer—They are as dictated by his Guru, that is, to follow the methods prescribed by his Guru.

Question 53—How is a Faqir benefitted ?

Answer—By following the methods prescribed by Guru.

Question 54—What constitutes the stratagem of a Faqir ?

Answer—To steer clear of the company of worldly people.

Question 55—What constitutes the sagacity of a Faqir ?

Answer—To prove himself a dedicated lover.

Question 56—In what kind of a situation, great harm is done to a Faqir ?

Answer—In behaving hypocritically, i. e., in showing great friendship outwardly, while remaining callous at heart.

Question 57—Has one to be good and sincere towards everybody ?

Answer—To the extent it is proper and possible, that is, as far as it is within one's power.

Question 58—In what does a Faqir find particular pleasure ?

Answer—In learning good manners from others.

Question 59—What is a Faqir's resolve ?

Answer—To pay obeisance to the Lord.

Question 60—Is it necessary to even make a search for one's daily bread ?

Answer—To seek a livelihood is not prohibited, rather, it is one's duty. Attainment of every worldly object depends on efforts and endeavours. Finally, it is destiny that governs everything. That alone happens which has fallen to our lot. Helping the humble and the lowly is an attribute and act of the Lord, and not of the slave.

Question 61—How many ways of begging are there ?

Answer—The first is to wait patiently. In Hindi, it is called "Ajgar Vritti" or the way of the python. The second is the way or method of the bee which smells the sweetness of pollen of each and every flower in the garden. In Hindi, it is called "Bhanwar Bhikshá" or the black-bee's way of begging. The third consists in a person's going to a sacrificial ground and somebody there giving him something without making any enquiry and without that person's asking for anything. The fourth method of begging consists in passing through people while uttering the Lord's Name. The above four methods of begging have been ranked as good, medium, bad and worse. Besides these, the help and support obtained from the king and wealthy persons are considered to be very bad indeed.

Question 62—Is it right to make disciples ?

Answer—So long as somebody is not a perfect Guru, he should not make disciples.

Question 63—Is it not through the disciple that the Guru attains name and fame ?

Answer—It is this name and fame which is the source of all evil.

Question 64—With whom should a Faqir develop friendship ?

Answer—With the Lord and His lovers.

Question 65—What about worldly people ?

Answer—Both friendship and enmity with worldly people are bad.

Question 66—What do you think of a Faqir's taking meat ?

Answer—Taking meat is bad for everybody.

Question 67—Which is better, eating sparingly or eating a lot ?

Answer—He who eats sparingly is put to a lesser disgrace than a glutton.

Question 68—What is our duty ?

Answer—To repay our debts.

Question 69—What happens if they remain unpaid, or one is unable to pay them back ?

Answer—They are carried over to the next life.

Question 70—What is meant by Duniyá (the world) ; and Daulat (wealth) ?

Answer—Egotism is Duniyá (the world) ; good health and penury constitute Daulat (wealth).

**Question 71**—When Rávan kidnapped Sita, she must have felt very restless and harassed at his place. In that case why did not she get Ravan consumed by the fire of her wrath ?

**Answer**—Sita had only Sattwik (good, benign) attributes in her. However much she would try to invoke anger, it would not come near her.

**Question 72**—When reading aloud something in Hindi a person does not move his body back and forth, but one reading or reciting Persian makes such movements. What is the reason ?

**Answer**—Hindi has originated from Nád (Shabd). The student of Persian first learns Alif and Bay and in pronouncing them, he has to exhale, that is, in uttering letters of the Persian alphabet, he has to give out his breath. If the person reading Persian does not move back and forth, his stomach will start aching. And so, the body of one who reads Persian shakes because of the way he breathes during reading.

**Question 73**—In Hindu religion there is a custom of putting up imitations of Shri Krishna and the cow-herdresses in Mathura and Brindaban. Is this proper ?

**Answer**—No. Neither worldly people nor Faqirs should do this, for others may cast a passionate look at them and, in this way, instead of any spiritual gain, sin will be committed. This will be the result in the case of worldly minded people. As regards Faqirs, they do not stand in need of such display.

**Question 74**—Amongst evil deeds, which is the most heinous?

**Answer**—(1) To wound one's feelings without any reason.

(2) Not to be thankful and grateful to one who has done one some good.

Baba Lal Dayal Ji was sitting under a tree. A piece of

straw was lying there. Prince Dara Shikoh picked it up and broke it. Baba Lal Dayal Ji closed his eyes and became lost in meditation. Thereafter, the prince again started asking questions. Baba Lal Dayal Ji told him "First finish breaking the straw and then talk, for time is very precious for everybody, especially for kings, and it should not be wasted in a haphazard manner. What would one gain by breaking a straw?" Dara Shikoh felt very much ashamed and remained sitting silently and with a respectful attitude. Baba Ji said to him "Please do not be offended. There should be no lapse on the part of a physician while administering medicine." Dara Shikoh submitted, "Blessed is the patient who recovers his health."

**Question 75**—How can the internal condition of a loving devotee be ascertained ?

**Answer**—How can the state of absorption in the love for the Lord be expressed by words of mouth ? Only a lover knows what this state is like. There is a couplet to the following effect : Someone asked "What sort of a thing is love ?" He got the reply "You will know it when you yourself become a lover."

**Question 76**—If only Thy grace and mercy so ordain, I, too, may perhaps become a loving devotee, for otherwise, it is difficult for princes and kings to attain that state.

**Answer**—When love attains the stage of perfection, that condition of getting merged or lost in the Lord is instantly attained, and the seeker achieves his goal.

O dear one ! Inasmuch as you have a liking for Fagirs and devotees in spite of your high status and great wealth, this noble quality on your part can prompt loving devotees to regard you as one who has reached the perfect stage of love. But you have to annihilate your ego and you must not be proud. One should ever beg for, and be hopeful of the Lord's grace and mercy and His infinite benevolence.

At the end of the above series of questions, Baba Lal Dayal Ji kept mum. Dara Shikoh wanted to ask him more questions. Thereupon Baba Lal Dayal Ji said "If questions are continued unabated in this manner and if the answer to each and every question has to be given then and there, where and when will the series end? What one should do is to grasp the gist of the discussions and derive benefit accordingly.

Thereafter, Dara Shikoh offered a bunch of flowers to Baba Lal Dayal Ji and said "Association undoubtedly produces its effect, but how is it that the green leaves in close contact with the flower lack the sweet scent of the flower? What can be the explanation for this?" Baba Lal Dayal Ji said, "Keep flowers and leaves for some time after mixing them together." So, this is what was done. After a little while, the leaves were found to be full of the sweet scent of the flowers. The Baba Ji thereupon observed, "When a thing mixes and identifies itself with another, it imbibes the effect of the latter."

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### (106) S A R M A D

Sarmad was related to some Armenian family of Iran. He was originally either a Jew or a Christian but, later on, became a Mohammedan. Sarmad's real name is not known nor what name he was given after he had become a Mohammedan. Sarmad is a nom-de-plume. His real name passed into oblivion and he came to be known as Sarmad and nothing but Sarmad. 'Sarmad' literally means (1) everlasting, (2) drenched and lost in the Lord's love, and (3) intoxicated.

Though the kind of education he received is not definitely known, this much can be guessed that he did acquire the highest education of his times.

He was a trader at first and started for India with

merchandise from Iran. His idea was to sell them, and then, after buying costly things from India, take them to his own country. But little did this young merchant know on what kind of transaction he would have to trade all his wealth on reaching India. In those days, India was famous as a centre of knowledge and learning as well as business, and students and businessmen from far off places used to visit this country. Sarmad had no inkling that he would have to transact business till his last breath not with transitory worldly objects but with the commodity of love in the market of love where, instead of silver and gold, one has to give away not only one's body and mind but one's life itself. The buyer sells away himself.

In those days, Iranian merchants used to come to India via Sind. Amongst the cities of Sind, Thatthá was quite well known. It was at this place that Sarmad started his business for the first time. An epoch-making event took place there. It is said that Sarmad became passionately attached to a Hindu boy called Abhai Chand.

The love-merchant set out as a customer in search of some captivator of the heart. But he sold away himself. What a grand business transaction it was.

Love is that gate-way without passing through which, a man cannot be called a man. What does he, whose mind and heart never ache in pain and whose eyes never get wet, know what humanity means? And this is the reason why even those trading in true love were found wandering earlier in lanes and bye-lanes of worldly love. So madly does man run after the world that he does not turn back so long as he does not get hard blows of pain and anguish. As long as a man does not receive such hard knocks of pain and suffering, he would not shun worldly pleasures. Such blows can be delivered by love alone. Only love has the power that the very first blow of its sabre cuts asunder all worldly relations. Love can be quickly and firmly implanted in a heart which has already suffered blows of love. The wick

already burnt and smouldering, gets soon ignited, bursting into a flame.

The utmost that is known about the boy who had turned Sarmad into a Majnún is this that he was a Hindu. And, even this is quite enough, for, when a bargain is struck in the market-place of love, who would care to know of such details as to what community the buyer belongs and what price is being paid or how much the seller gets. This, too, is not exactly known as to where precisely Sarmad was struck by this lightning of love. Some say that this happened in the city of Thatthá in Sind, others think that the city of Surat was the place, while according to still others, the event took place in the city of Patná in Bihár.

The madness and insanity of love took such a powerful grip on Sarmad that, along with his sense and understanding, he even ruined his business and allowed all his merchandise to go to waste. As far as worldly bondages are concerned, he was left with just a piece of cloth to cover his body with. Ultimately, he got himself relieved of that burden, too. This worldly love made a true lover of Sarmad and took him to the highest stage of true love. For a long time, he roamed the dust-laden barren tracts of India. He spent the hot and cold months of the country remaining stark naked all the time. Finally, it dawned upon him—

Why are you needlessly wandering in search of Him ?  
Even if he be Khudá\* (Lord), he will himself come unto you. You remain firm in your seat.

Sarmad began to look for a permanent location where he could entrench himself and keep waiting for the final test of love.

He reached Delhi during the last days of emperor Shah Jahan's reign. Dára Shikoh was to succeed him. He was very much attached to Sufis and Sadhus and had great respect and regard for Mahatmas intoxicated with and lost

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\*. There is a pun on the word Khuda here. Khuda-master, Lord, and one who comes himself.

in the Lord's love. He became a disciple and devotee of Sarmad and used to spend most of his time in his company and in performing his Sewa. Slowly and gradually, the number of Sarmad's devotees went on increasing and the whole city began to worship him. The begotted Mullahs (Mohammedan priests) became alert and vigilant. Finding Dara Shikoh's side gaining in strength because of Sarmad's presence, Aurangzeb and his followers became perturbed. Sarmad was not just an ordinary Faqir. It was impossible to defeat him in debates. Aurangzeb and his associates could do precious little, for emperor Sháh Jahán was still alive and Dara Shikoh was the crown prince. Besides, people had great respect and regard for Sarmad. For all these reasons, it was beyond the power of Aurangzeb and his Mullah supporters to vanquish Sarmad. Finding that there was no scope for open hostilities, they started hatching intrigues. Aurangzeb and the begotted Mullahs, who were his supporters, started waiting in ambush for assassinating Sarmad.

Ultimately, Aurangzeb succeeded in ascending the throne after imprisoning his father Shah Jahan and slaying his brothers. For Dara Shikoh's associates and all those who sided with him, that time was fraught with no less danger than what it was for Dara Shikoh himself. Aurangzeb had made each one of Dara Shikoh's friends and associates his target. Some were killed. Others ran away to save themselves. There was no question of Sarmad's going anywhere. He had to reach the final stage of love and that was to happen here itself. He remained lost in the state of self-absorption. Aurangzeb had set Kajis and Mufti Mullahs (expounders of Mohammedan Law) on Sarmad. Their leader was Kaji Abdul Qavi who was generally known by the name of 'Kaji Qavi'. One day when Sarmad was passing through the market stark naked, the Kaji's men caught hold of him and took him to their master. The Kaji said "Faqir ! What impropriety is this ? Why don't you put on clothes" ? Sarmad replied "Baba, what can I do ? Satan (Devil) is 'Qavi' (very powerful)." Hearing this, the Kaji pulled a long face and that was but natural, for, his name 'Qavi' had been

used as an adjective or attribute of Satan by Sarmad. Did Sarmad mean that he, Qavi, was Satan himself? In other words, Qavi had undressed Sarmad and made him naked?

Kaji Qavi reported the matter to the emperor. The latter called a meeting which was attended by many eminent Maulvis and courtiers. Sarmad was summoned to appear before them. Emperor Aurangzeb was the first to ask, "People say that Sarmad made the prophesy that Dara Shikoh would ascend the throne. Is that true?" Sarmad replied "Yes, that prophesy has come true. Dara Shikoh has been the recipient of eternal sovereignty and an imperishable kingdom". Aurangzeb again asked, "Why do you remain naked and wear nothing"? Sarmad's reply was

He who conferred on you the emperor's crown has blest me with troubles and misfortunes. Whomsoever He found full of blemishes He clad him so that his faults and defects might be covered up, and whomsoever He found to be without a blemish, He allowed him to remain stark naked.

Hearing this crushing reply, Aurangzeb was silenced. He became perplexed and nonplussed. In spite of the persistent instigation of the Kaji, the emperor could not muster enough courage to put an end to Sarmad's life on the charge of remaining naked. Aurangzeb knew that the number of Sarmad's followers was not small, and Sarmad himself was not an ordinary man. There was a possibility of a revolt breaking out, and so, he told the Kaji that the mere charge of nudity did not warrant capital punishment and some really strong ground and evidence would be necessary for that purpose. In this way, the calamity was averted for the time being.

But the Kaji was Qavi (powerful), and Sarmad's head was a constant eye-sore to him. One day it so happened that Sarmad had a cup of 'Bhang' (hemp) in his hand and was about to drink it but, in the mean time, the Kaji came. He asked, "Faqir ! What drink is this"? Replied Sarmad,

"Bábá ! This is just a herb from the forest". The Kaji shot back, "Bhang (hemp) is an intoxicant. Its drinking is forbidden. You will be charged with the offence of violating the law of Islam". Touching the Kaji's trousers by his fingers' ends, Sarmad asked, "Baba ! What about this" ? The Kaji took the hint and said, "It is undoubtedly improper to put on a silk cloth, but in this cloth, silk is mixed with cotton and that is why it is called 'Mashrú' (cloth of mixed silk and cotton, which is permitted by the law of Islam). Sarmad thereupon said, "Baba ! In this cold drink, too, there are several other ingredients like Sounf (anise seeds) black pepper, etc." The Kaji remained quiet with a wry face, and he could not recommend Sarmad's prosecution on this charge. Sounf (anise seeds) and black pepper hit the nail right in the head of the Kaji. The cold drink, indeed, had thrown cold water on all his enthusiasm and plan.

Ultimately, Kaji Qavi and the other Mullahs were able to find out, after an extensive search, evidence strong enough for a charge which could send Sarmad to the gallows and they thus succeeded in achieving their avowed objective. There is a verse by Sarmad which says—

He who has developed faith in the existence and greatness of the Lord and has understood what His true form is, has himself become loftier than the sky. The Mullahs say that Mohammed rose to the sky to meet God, but I say that the sky itself merged in Mohammed.

To this, the Mullahs gave the interpretation that Sarmad was denying the fact of Mohammed Saheb's ascending to the sky in person. He was, therefore, an infidel deserving capital punishment. Although there are thousands of such expressions and verses with Sufis, that did not matter at all, for, Sarmad's real offence was his being an associate of Dará Shikoh, and this was only an excuse. The Mullahs managed to have a declaration of death sentence issued on this ground alone.

Besides this, there is yet another reason on record.

Sarmad never used to recite the whole of the Kalmá (the Mohammedan confession of faith). He would only say "Lá-Iláh", which means there is no one worthy of worship. The complete Kalmá is "Lá Iláh Il Alláh Muhammad Rasúl Alláh" (There is no one worthy of worship except Allah, whose prophet or messenger Mohammed is). Sufis do not recite the latter part of the Kalma (Muhammad Rasúl Alláh). They only say "Lá Iláh Il Alláh" (There is no one worthy of worship except Alláh). But Sarmad used to recite only the first half of even this portion.

When Sarmad was summoned to the royal court, Aurangzeb ordered the Maulvis to ask him to recite the Kalma as it had come to the notice of the emperor that Sarmad did not go beyond "Lá Iláh" while reciting the Kalmá. At the instance of the emperor, the Maulvis asked Sarmad to recite the Kalma. Sarmad, as was his wont, said only "La Ilah" and then kept quiet. On the Maulvis' thereupon raising a hue and cry, Sarmad said, "I am still lagging behind and have not reached the final stage as yet. If I were to say "Lah Ilah Il Allah", I would be telling a lie. How can a thing which is not in my heart come out from my lips"? The Maulvis declared that this was downright "Kufr" (infidelity), and if Sarmad did not say Tobá, that is, if he did not regret and repent, he should be put to death. Little did these ignorant and bigotted Mullahs know that Sarmad was far beyond the verdicts of infidelity and capital punishment. Why should he be afraid of death who looks upon death as the death or end of death itself, that is, who regards death as an instrument of attaining immortality?

This death is not mine, but it is the death of my death. Why should I be afraid of death when, after death, I shall not have to die again?

A great fire of love was raging within Sarmad which could hardly be extinguished by a sprinkle of the water of threat of capital punishment. Sarmad was ready for his trial,

A day before Sarmad's execution, a few persons were reciting some couplets sitting by the side of the water-tank in the Jámá Masjid (mosque) in Delhi, when Sarmad came there. On seeing them, Sarmad smiled and said—

For many days, Sarmad's story had become old and antiquated. I shall now give it a fresh turn from a new angle, and shall once again present the prospect of facing the impaling stake and the gallows in a halo of light.

Next day, that very thing happened which Sarmad had predicted.

On hearing the abovementioned couplet of Sarmad, those people were completely taken aback, and when they requested him to tell them something more, he recited the following couplet,

That playful One, who was my pal, severed my head  
from my body. It was a nice thing he did, for that  
was the end of the story. The severe head-ache from  
which I was suffering, was gone.

When Sarmad was taken to the execution ground, almost the entire city had gathered there. So great was the crowd that it was difficult to pass through the roads on which people were proceeding packed shoulder to shoulder; as if the marriage party of some prince was going and the members of the party formed an almost unending stream. In those circumstances, too, Sarmad was in his usual state of intoxication and he broke forth—

They are going to kill me,  
O Lord, for the guilt of my loving Thee, and that is  
why all this tumult.  
Thou, too, mountest the terrace to see what a great fun  
this is.

When the executioner arrived with a dazzling sword in his

hand, Sarmad looked straight into his eyes with a smile on his face and said—

I sacrifice myself before Thee. Welcome, my friend, I very well recognize Thee, no matter in what garb you come.

After reciting this couplet, he put his head under the executioner's sword and gave away his life like a hero.

One of Sarmad's Rubáís is given below.

A greedy person has no pangs of love. The burning of a moth is not given to a fly. Everybody cannot be fortunate enough to have the wealth of the Darshan of the Lord in one life.

### Ghazal

If you desire to get a benign glance of Sat Guru, surrender your Surat and mind to Him with love and devotion. (1)

Deplorable is the condition of all here. If you want to save yourself, take Saran (refuge) of Sat Guru. (2)

Cast off all doubts and come under the Saran (protection) of Sat Guru. Go on strengthening your love for and faith in Him. (3)

Knock at the door of Sat Guru and sweep clean the path of His devotees. (4)

Sacrifice yourself before Sat Guru the way a moth sacrifices itself before light. Sweep the dust of His throne with your eye-lashes. (5)

In His grace and mercy, Sat Guru may give you honey. If He thinks proper, He may give you poison. You should cheerfully and gratefully accept whatever He gives. You should drink it up and say "Sat Guru be

praised ! My Sat Guru be praised ! He shall surely  
redeem me from this thralldom. (6)

### (107) M A L Ú K D Á S J Í

Bábá Malúk Dás Jí was born on the fifth day of the dark half of Vaisákh in 1631 Vikram (1574 A. D.) in the family of Sundar Das Kakkar Khatri in a village called Kará in the district of Allahabad. Even at the age of five, if he would find any thorn or rubbish lying on the lane (adjoining his house) while playing there, he would pick it up and dump it in a corner. One day, a certain Mahatma happened to pass through that very lane. Seeing the boy, Maluk Das, he asked people whose son he was. Then, calling his father to him, he said "It is strange that this boy is playing all alone on this lane. His unusually long arms indicate that he may either become a very powerful king or attain the high status of a Sadh." Indeed, Baba Maluk Das Ji's arms would reach below his knees when he stood up. Hearing the Mahatma, Baba Maluk Das Ji's father was dumb-founded but Baba Maluk Das Ji said "Mahatma Ji, what you are saying is true."

From his very boyhood, Baba Maluk Das Ji used to perform the Sewa of Sadhus with great zeal and enthusiasm. If any Sadhu or hungry person would come to his place, Baba Maluk Das Ji would warmly receive him and arrange for his food. One day it so happened that a batch of Sadhus came and wanted to have food. Baba Maluk Das Ji made a hole in a wall of the storeroom, and after having taken out all the food materials lying there, fed the Sadhus sumptuously. His mother, on entering the store room for bringing dry eatables like wheat flour, etc., at the time of daily cooking, found nothing there. The poor woman started weeping, being at a loss to know how food for the family was going to be prepared. She said "This must be the doing of Mallú". Baba Maluk Das Ji came there in the mean time and asked

“Mother, what makes you weep ?” The mother replied “My son, your own action of feeding the Sadhus with whatever there was in the store-room and thereby keeping your own parents hungry”. Maluk Das Ji thereupon said “I have not taken even a single food grain.” Irritated by this, his mother caught hold of him and took him to the store-room wanting to show him that all the containers were lying empty. But when they reached there and had a look, they found the containers as full of the various items as ever.

When Baba Maluk Das Ji attained the age of ten to eleven, his father wanted to engage him in some trade or business, and giving him some blankets, asked him to sell them in the market. In the village, there used to be a market on every eighth day and Baba Maluk Das Ji used to go to sell blankets there. If any Sadhu or poor man would ask for a blanket, he would give it free to him.

Once Baba Maluk Das Ji went to a far off village to sell blankets there but, on that day neither could he sell any blanket, nor was there any such person who asked for it and whom he could give it free. He became tired while bringing the entire bundle of blankets back home on his head and, on the way, sat down in the shade of a tree. A labourer came there and said that he would carry the entire bundle of blankets to Maluk Das Ji's place if he was paid just a two penny coin. Going at a fast pace, the labourer went ahead of Maluk Das Ji who then returned home while singing the Lord's praise in a care-free manner. Finding the labourer bringing the bundle of blankets all alone, Maluk Das Ji's mother had the suspicion that he might have taken out some blankets. Hence, she gave him a little food, and on the pretext of feeding him, shut him up in a room, thinking that when her son would be back, he could check the number of blankets in the bundle and then let him go.

When Maluk Das Ji returned, his mother told him in an angry tone “Why are you so careless ? Go and open the bundle, and check the number of blankets. If they are all

there, then only let the labourer go ; I have given him something to eat." Baba Maluk Das Ji got upset and when he opened the room and entered it, he found that the labourer had disappeared in the meantime leaving just a piece of bread, which Baba Maluk Das Ji picked up and ate considering it to be Prasad (sanctified food). Then, falling at his mother's feet, he said "You are fortunate, for the Lord gave you His Darshan in the guise of a labourer, while me He befooled. I am now taking my seat in this very room, and so long as I do not tell you, do not open it, nor kick up a row. So saying, Baba Maluk Das Ji entrenched himself in the room and got lost in the contemplation of the Lord's form. It was only when he had the Lord's Darshan face to face on the second or third day that he came out, and then paid obeisance to his mother. Thereafter, he practised Dhyān and Bhajan in this manner regularly.

Baba Maluk Das Ji's fame now spread far and wide. Thousands of people started coming for his Darshan from far-off places and many Jivas began to have the benefit of his Satsang and instructions regularly.

It is said that once an unprecedented famine broke out and things came to such a pass that even no leaves were left in the trees which people could eat. Thousands came to Baba Ji crying piteously, and falling at his feet, prayed that he might be pleased to invoke rains. First, of course, Baba Ji pleaded with them a lot expressing his inability to do anything in the matter, but when they would not be convinced on any account, he, out of pity, went with them to the fields for praying for rains. In the meantime, Lal Das, a Gurumukh disciple of Baba Maluk Das Ji, came and not finding his Guru on the throne, he made enquiries and came to know that the Guru had gone out of his locality in the company of villagers for offering prayers for rains. When he heard this, he became very angry and said how proud god Indra was that he would send down showers only when his Guru Maharaj would leave his throne and go out. So saying,

he picked up a certain Sadhu's 'Bhang\*-muller' and cried out "I shall right now give such a blow to Indra with this cudgel that he will come crashing down here together with his royal throne." As soon as he raised the Bhang-muller, Indra started trembling in fear and began to shower heavy rains that very moment. Baba Maluk Das Ji had not yet reached the fields and when he saw that it was already raining, he came back to his hermitage from mid-way. Then, hearing all that had happened in the mean time, he became very much displeased with his disciple and said that one should not resort to this kind of coercion against the gods, but should get work out of them by pleasing them. The disciple thereupon asked for his Guru's forgiveness in great humility, but Guru Ji ordered him "Go, and come back only after circumambulating the earth." As soon as he got this command, the disciple dived into the river Ganges and came out of the water near a ship on the ocean. On finding him drifting with the current, the crew took him out of water and brought him before the owner of the ship who was a merchant. He was asked by the merchant "Where were you ship-wrecked?" His reply was "Nowhere ; I am out to circumambulate the earth at my Guru's command." On being pressed hard, he told the merchant all about the matter and also informed him of the whereabouts of his Guru. Thereafter, he again dived into the sea and vanished. The merchant was very much astonished and the Guru Ji's greatness was firmly implanted in his mind.

A few days after, the merchant's ship was in grave danger. He then took the vow that if the ship were saved through the grace and mercy of Baba Maluk Das Ji, he would offer one-fourth of his merchandise at Maluk Das Ji's holy feet. By mercy, the ship was saved, and the merchant came to Kará with a quarter of his merchandise for Baba Ji's Sewa and described all that had happened. A minister of emperor Álamgír was with Baba Ji at that time. He was seized with a

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\* Bhang—an intoxicating infusion of powdered hemp-leaves.

great hankering when he saw a costly pearl necklace which the merchant was holding in his hands ready to put it round Baba Ji's neck. Baba Ji said "It would not be right to accept anything free, but I had to work hard to save your ship from total destruction." So saying, he raised the napkin from his shoulder and showed his back which had several marks on it. Then, taking the pearl-necklace from the merchant's hands, he put it round the minister's neck.

The minister, beside himself with joy, came back to the emperor and told him all about Maluk Das Ji and praised him a great deal. Alamgir, who was a bigotted Mohammedan, gave the order that three of his attendants should go forthwith and bring Baba Ji to his presence no matter in what posture Baba Ji might be sitting then.

Amongst those three attendants, two were nice fellows, but the third one was a scoundrel who made up his mind to catch hold of Baba Ji in whatever posture he might be sitting and bring him to the emperor. But this third attendant expired on the very way to Baba Ji's hermitage. The other two reached there and on Baba Ji's telling them that he would leave in their company next morning, they agreed, but on that very day, Baba Ji vanished from Satsang in the evening and, reaching Delhi, entered the royal palace. Thereafter, he appeared at the very place where the emperor was sitting with his queen. Frightened, the emperor asked "Who are you?" Baba Ji replied "I am Malúká whom you wanted to meet." The queen left the place and the emperor, after getting Baba Ji seated with great courtesy and respect, asked him to what caste he belonged. Baba Ji's reply was that Faqirs had no caste or sect. The emperor thereupon ordered to cook 'Khichri' for Baba Ji's dinner. When the vessel containing the cooked food came and it was opened, some puppies were found inside it instead of 'Khichri', whereupon Baba Ji asked the emperor "Do you take this kind of Khichri?" The emperor became very angry with the cook and ordered him to prepare Khichri again. This time, on opening the container, some dust was found

in it. Baba Ji remarked that that was food fit for Faqirs and, taking a pinch of dust from the vessel, he blew at it with his mouth, whereupon the whole of Delhi had such a severe dust-storm and torrential rains that the entire city was about to be destroyed. Thereafter, on the emperor's praying to him, Baba Ji got the danger averted.

Alamgir said Namaz prayers standing on the top of the well and, as a fitting reply to that feat, Baba Ji performed Bhajan while hanging in the air without any support. Seeing these miraculous feats, emperor Alamgir was convinced that Baba Maluk Das Ji was a perfect saint endowed with supernatural powers, and he very humbly requested Baba Ji to ask for something from him but Baba Ji would not accede to his request. However, on Alamgir's very fervently praying to him, he said "All right ; firstly, in respect of Kará, you order a remission of the Jaziá tax which you have imposed on Hindus in general. Secondly, make a gift of a village to each of the two attendants, referred to, and issue a declaration to the effect that they are not to fetch me here any more." The emperor wrote out both these orders and handed them over to Baba Ji who, taking them with him, again appeared at the Satsang at dead of night and lifting the scarf with which he used to cover himself from head to foot, told the Satsangis, "It is already very late today, and you all now go back to your respective places." Next morning, Baba Ji showed the royal declaration to the two attendants, one of whom went back carried away by greed for landed property, but the other person said "If by leaving this holy Darbar (Satsang), I can get emperorship, I shall consider even that as mere dust." The grave of this second attendant can be found to this day by the side of Baba Ji's Samadh.

Once when Baba Ji was having his own house built, several labourers were buried under the debris. When they were taken out, they were all found alive. They said that a person who looked like Baba Ji had appeared before them while they were lying buried and saved them.

The only son of a certain milk woman had died. When the mother started crying piteously and prayed again and again to Baba Ji, he made a small cut in his own finger and, taking a little blood, put it into the boy's mouth and revived him.

Baba Ji left his mortal coil in 1682 at the age of one hundred and eight. When the day of his departure from this world came, he called his disciples and kith and kin unto himself and said "When it is noon and there are reverberations of sounds of the bell and conch within you, you should know that I have left my mortal coil. You should allow my body to drift away with the current of the river Ganges, but do not cremate it.

Jagannath Ji told his priests in a dream that a bamboo structure with a dead body on it was lying on the sea-shore and they should pick it up and bring it to him. When that bamboo structure was brought, the priests placed it before the idol and went outside. Immediately thereafter, the doors of the temple were automatically closed. Baba Maluk Das Ji prayed to Jagannath Ji saying "May I have a resting place by the side of your drain and, as for food, may I get some thick bread made of the broken grains in the chaff winnowed out of the rice and pulses meant for your 'Bhog' (food) together with some vegetable preparation made with the skin of the vegetables meant for you." Jagannath Ji granted his prayer and declared "Your 'Bhog' will be more tasteful than mine." Baba Maluk Das Ji's resting place by the side of Jagannath Ji's drain can be found even to this day, and the practice is still continued of preparing thick bread in Maluk Das Ji's name, which pilgrims get as Prasad along with Jagannath Ji's 'Bhog'.

Some of Baba Maluk Das Ji's Sakhi (couplets) and Shabd (hymns) are given below.

### SAKHI

The python does not engage in any service nor does

the bird do any job to be able to survive. Says Maluk Das that it is the Lord who gives everybody everything. (1)

Respect, honour, eminence and the gaity of youth all four of them vanish in thin air as soon as someone begs for something. (2)

All die for power but none for the Powerful Being. Power and authority become the slaves of one who dies for the sake of the Lord. (3)

Says Maluk Das, that haunted remains the house where food is cooked all through the day but not even a bit of it comes outside, that is, given to any outsider. (4)

Do not break the green branch of a tree. It hurts the tree like one stabbed by a knife or pierced by an arrow. Says Maluk Das, you should know that all Jivas are like you. (5)

Do not go to a place where Guru's Nam is not uttered. What has a washer-man to do in a village of Digambars (nudes) ? (6)

Drink no water in, and avoid that country where there is no trace or mention of Sat Guru's Nam. (7)

He is a worthy son who is in the know of Guru's Nam. Without singing Guru's Nam, the unworthy son remains wandering like a destitute beggar. (8)

There may be just one particle of Guru's Nam and crores of mountains of sins, yet, such is the greatness of Nam that even that small particle of IT reduces all the sins to ashes. (9)

Make Guru's Nam your medicine and, enshrining IT in your heart, remember IT. Direct your attention to IT when faced with a calamity, and IT will remove all your troubles. (10)

Says Maluk Das, "I remain care-free reposing my trust in Nam and never go out in search of a job. It is the Lord who earns for me and I enjoy the fruit. (11)

He is a worthy son who performs Bhakti (devotion) whole-heartedly. He is rid of recurrent births and deaths, and he becomes undecaying and immortal. (12)

If you have love for the Lord within, do not go on telling others about it. The knower of the innermost recesses of all is fully aware of what is within you. (13)

Whatever acts, hidden or manifest, do I commit under the influence of the evil tendencies of my mind, are known to Thee, O my Sat Guru, the knower of the innermost recesses of all. (14)

Perform Sumiran in such a manner that others do not notice it. Do not let your lips be seen moving. You should keep your love for the Lord hidden. (15)

Remove the pain and misery, O Lord, of all those who are unhappy in this world. Let Maluk Das have poverty and destitution, and all others affluence and happiness. (16)

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### Shabd (1)

Cast away these delusions and superstitions from your mind. Do not consult the Brahman before starting on a journey, nor think that some particular day or date is inauspicious. (1)

Take your food though it is evening without even lighting a lamp. They are all fools who say that this is the time when ghosts and demons have their sway. (2)

If you yourself are good, others will be good to you. Do not say that others are bad. If someone has some evil tendency, keep away from him, (3)

Strange are the ways of the world. Who is going to follow them ? People kill living beings and worship stone idols. They have no kindness or pity at heart.

(4)

Remain care-free, reposing trust in Nam alone, and take to the way of heroes. Do not mind if any danger befalls you, and have no greed for life.

(5)

Rites and rituals and traditions and customs are all delusions. They are the snares of the world. Holding the Jiva in Maya's net, they have hurled him down. How can the ignorant Jiva realize this ?

(6)

This world is a vast ocean and, seeing it, one would be afraid. But now that you have adopted the Lord's Saran, you need have no fear for it, says the lover Maluk Das.

(7)

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### Shabd (2)

Maya, the black female cobra, has smitten the whole world. She has smitten Indra, Brahmá, Nárad and Vyás. She also smote Shiv as she sat with him for a moment talking to him. (The reference, here, is to an account given in Durgá Purán (mythology) according to which Maya went to Shiv and wanted him to satisfy her sex-hunger. Shiv said that she was his mother and he could fulfil her desire only if she came after changing her garb. She did so and then Shiv satisfied her).

(1)

She smote Kansa and Shishu Pál. She also smote Rávan who, endowed with ten heads, was the king of Lanká, but lost it in a moment.

(2)

She smote many a clever snake-charmer and none could survive her onslaught, In Kachh, she struck even

Gorakh Nath whose sense of discernment was unsurpassable. (3)

She struck down high and great ones of the world, by picking them one by one, not to speak of poor fellows like me who stand nowhere, says Maluk Das. (4)

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### Shabd (3)

What does a pigeon-hearted slave of Maya know about paying obeisance to the Lord ? With Sadhus, he fights and quarrels, and he robs them. He worships Brahmans but oppresses the poor. (1)

With a rosary in hand, which is just an emblem of hypocrisy, with sectarial marks like Tilak on his person and with religious scriptures in his arm-pits, he cheats one and all. (2)

Says Maluk Das, "Give up your hypocritical ways and sing the praise of the Merciful Sat Guru, and then only will the dirt and filth within you be removed." (3)

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### Shabd (4)

The last moment you were afraid of, has now arrived. You never performed the Bhakti of Nam and now you are at a loss to know what to do. (1)

All for whom you toiled and wasted your life are a source of pain and sorrow. You spent your life in vain weeping and bemoaning with the noose of attachment tied round your neck. (2)

Your body, mind and wealth are not your own, nay, not even your son and wife. In no time they part company with you. Think for yourself and you will be convinced, (3)

This human life is a rare asset which you have earned as a result of the virtuous deeds you performed. It is a pity that you wasted it in vain and did not make it fruitful. (4)

When will you associate with Sadhus ? The present opportunity is gone. Says Maluk Das, you did not subdue even one of your five enemies, viz., Kam (passion), Krodh (anger), Lobh (avarice), Moh (attachment) and Ahankar (egotism). (5)

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### Shabd (5)

O the Friend and Lord of the humble and the lowly !  
Do have a look of pity and compassion at me. I have  
no brother, no comrade, no relation, no family,  
and not even a friendly person to whom I can go. (1)

I have neither gold nor silver, nor even a small penny,  
so that I can get something in exchange. (2)

I have no agricultural land and no vegetable garden.  
I do not carry on any trade or business. And I know  
of no such wealthy person of whom I could ask for  
anything. (3)

Says Maluk Das, "Cherish no hope of getting anything  
from others. Having obtained the gift of the Lord's  
Name, who else's refuge are you seeking now ?" (4)

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### (108) SUNDAR DAS JI

Sundar Das Ji was born at noon on the ninth day of the bright half of Chait in 1653 Vikram (1596 A. D.) in a Khandelwál Vaish family of the Búsar sect in the old capital, Dyosá, of the then princely state of Jaipur. The name of his father was 'Śáh Chokhá' (his other name was Parmanand).

Sati was the name of his mother. She was the daughter of a Khandelwal Vaish belonging to the 'Sonkia sect of Amber.

There is a story about his birth. One day, Jaggá Jí, a favourite disciple of Dadu Dayal, was going from place to place in Amber, begging for yarn and, in his enthusiasm, was crying out "Give, O mother, 'Soot' (yarn) and have, mother, in return, a 'Poot' (son)." In days of old, it was the practice with Sadhus that when they needed a cloth for their use, they could get yarn by begging and weave a cloth. When Jagga Ji came before the house of a money-lender of Sonkia, his cry was heard by a certain devotee of Dadu Dayal. His unmarried girl, whose name was Sati, thought that here was some fun, and bringing some yarn to Jagga Ji said, "Take, Baba Ji, this 'Soot' (yarn)." Jagga Ji in reply uttered, "Have, mother, a 'Poot' (son)."

When Jagga Ji returned to his Guru's place, the latter said "You have got yourself cheated, that girl is not destined to have a son. So, how can she have a son unless you yourself go and take abode in her womb"? Very much despirited, Jagga Ji said "I bow to Thy command, but I pray that I may not be separated from Thy holy feet." After consoling him, Dadu Saheb ordered "Go and tell the parents of that girl that, no matter where her marriage is fixed, they should inform her husband before hand that the son who would be born to them would be a great devotee but he would renounce the world at the age of eleven." Jagga Ji carried out this order of his Guru.

After a few years, Jagga Ji died, and then taking abode in Sati Ji's womb, was born as her son in due course. Dadu Dayal came to Dyosá when the child was six years old. The child's father laid him at Dadu Dayal's feet, who, placing his hand on the child's head, said "He is a very 'Sundar' (handsome) child." According to some, Dadu Dayal had said "O Sundar (handsome one) ! So you have come," by which he had meant "Jagga, you have been born in the garb

of Sundar.” Be that as it may, he was given the name of Sundar from that very time and he became Dadu Ji’s disciple then and there. From that very moment, too, he became a constant companion of his Guru and remained at his feet up to the time of his (Dadu Dayal’s) passing away in Naráná in 1603 A. D. And by dint of his Sanskar (spiritual attainment of his past life), Sundar Das Ji was able to accomplish his task fully within such a short period.

Leaving Narana, Sundar Das Ji stayed for some time in Dídváná with Sadhu Prág Das, a disciple of Dadu Dayal. He then went to his parents in Dyosa in the company of Sadhu Jag Jivan Ji who was an erudite scholar of Sanskrit, and there, up to 1606 A. D., remained engaged in holding Satsang, delivering discourses on the glory of the Lord, and in reading as well as giving instructions on religious scriptures. The same year, when he was eleven years old, he left for Kashi (Varanasi) in the company of Jag Jivan Ji. For nineteen years, that is, up to the age of thirty, he stayed there, studying Sanskrit, Vedant, Darshan (Hindu philosophy), Purán and treatises on Yoga. In Kashi, he also attended the Satsang of several Mahatmas and Sadhus.

Sundar Das Ji returned from Kashi in 1615 A. D. Other Sadhus also accompanied him, amongst whom there was one who was to go to Fatehpur Shekhávátí. Sundar Das Ji went with him there, and finding that his dear brother-disciple, Prag Das, was also staying there, and being requested by local merchants who were very much devoted to Sadhus, he stayed on at that very place and took to the practice of Yoga assiduously. Side by side, he used to hold Satsang and sing the Lord’s praise as well as make others do the same. He also made many Jivas take to the path of true religion. Sundar Das Ji’s fame rapidly spread at this place. For some days, he also stayed in Dídváná a second time with Prag Das, and there, jointly with Prag Das and Rajjab Ji of SÁNGÁNER, he mostly remained engaged in probing the inner meaning of the Bani of Dadu Dayal so much so that he came to be regarded as one having no equal in

understanding the significance of those profound verses. People say that his books are a valuable guide to the study of Dadu Dayal's Bani.

Sundar Das Ji used to remain mostly in Fatehpur. At times, he would move out from there, and go to Sámgáner (at Rajjab's place) for Satsang and travels, to Dadu Dwara (head-quarters of the Dadu sect) in Narana, to places and regions which Dadu Saheb had visited or where he had stayed, such as Sámbar, Amber, Kalyanpur, Delhi, Agra, Lahore, Bihar, Gujrat, Marwar, Mewar, Malwa etc. He visited Benares (Varanasi) again, and it was there that he wrote the book "Gyan Samudra" (ocean of knowledge) in 1653 A. D.

Sundar Das Ji was a poet from his very boyhood but in his compositions, one would hardly find the hollow rhetoric and clever rhyming of worldly poets, rather, as in the case of great Sadhus and Mahatmas, his writings are drenched through and through in love for the Lord, renunciation, devotion to Guru and spiritual realization. One may call it poetry of a very high order, or the attempt of a devout practitioner of Yoga to probe into and discern the truth, or the Bani (compositions) of one who is the head-jewel or the foremost among Sadhus, but one thing is certain that his writings are a price-less treasure in the store-house of Indian literature. Sundar Das Ji was very much against amorous sentiments.

While opposed to amorous poetry, Sundar Das Ji had a liking for subtle satire and humour. His poems are full of delicate expressions of wit, satire and humour in which the gravity and dryness (prosaic nature) of Vedant get dissolved. Sundar Das Ji had no equal in presenting before the general public the essence of Vedant in a simple language. It is for this reason that in the book "Bhakt Mal" by Raghav he has been given the title of "Shankarácharya."

Sundar Das Ji was not only an erudite scholar of

Sanskrit, but he was also well versed in Hindi. He did not like writing poems in Sanskrit because that would not benefit the general public. He also knew several other languages like Persian, Púrbi (the Hindi dialect of the eastern parts of northern India), Punjabi, Gujrati and Marwari, as is evident from the books written by him.

Sundar Das Ji used to like neatness and cleanliness as well as simple and straightforward dealings. He hated dirt and filth of any kind. He has made great fun of dirty and unclean behaviour.

Sundar Das Ji stayed in Fatehpur up to about 1687 A. D. Then, in the course of travels, he reached Sanganer which is at a distance of eight miles from Jaipur in the south and where Dadu Dayal's chief and most favourite disciple, Rajjab Ji, with whom Sundar Das Ji was on affectionate terms, used to stay. Sundar Das Ji fell ill here, and though there was a continuous aggravation in his illness, he would take no medicine other than his Guru's Nam. He used to remain lost in Dhyan all the time. Finally, he left his mortal coil on the bank of a river on a Thursday which was the eighth day of the bright half of Kartik in 1746 Vikram (1689 A. D.). The discourse which he delivered just before his departure from this world is known as his "Last Sákhi".

The Antah-karan is full of ego and pride and the senses are engaged in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Says Sundar Das, the body is subject to illness and disease, but the Atma (soul) is quite distinct from all of them. (1)

My physician is my Guru and my medicine is Guru's Nam. Says Sundar Das, the only remedy now is the practice of Sumiran all the time. (2)

Says Sundar Das, this is not the time to have any fear, rather, it is a supremely auspicious occasion. Atma is about to merge in Parmatma, and it matters little whether the body survives or perishes. (3)

Seven short of a hundred years has my body survived,  
Says Sundar Das. My Atma (soul) is immortal, though  
my body is of the dust, dusty. (4)

His bier was accompanied by a large and imposing procession of the Sadhus and followers of the Dadu sect as well as his own disciples. In Sanganer, where he left his mortal coil and his body was cremated, a raised platform and a canopy have been built.

Sundar Das Ji had a handsome and well-shaped body, a fair complexion, a bright and imposing personality, tall stature, an unusually large head and a broad forehead. He had beautiful and bright eyes and a sweet and charming voice. He was neither garrulous nor did he talk too sparingly. In matters of food and dealings with others, he used to exercise great care and restraint. When he met children, he would be very happy to talk to them and, at times, he would recite before them saucy rhymes which he would compose then and there. He would never be tired of practising Dhyan and Bhajan and in reciting from the holy books. He maintained this habit and routine right up to a ripe old age. He would not care for anybody but, at the same time, would not say anything which would hurt anybody's feelings. By nature, he was given to cutting jokes and making fun of men and things. On any topic concerning devotion to the Lord, tears would flow from his eyes in torrents. He was a celibate from his boyhood. He would hate any discussion on women. He had firm faith in and would strictly follow whatever his Guru said.

Some portions of Sundar Das Ji's Bání are given below.

### Shabd (1)

Guru is my mother, Guru is my father, Guru is my friend and Guru is my very body. My Guru Dev has created my whole being, from head to foot. (1)

Guru gave me inner vision, Guru endowed me with

the faculty of speech. Guru Dev gave me ears to hear His Shabd. (2)

Guru has given me hands and feet, Guru has endowed me with the gift of devotion, and He has invested my body with Prán or life. (3)

Says Sundar Das, if Guru is merciful to me, He will effect my redemption by mending me. (4)

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### Shabd (2)

Without Guru, there is no Gyan (knowledge) or Dhyan, and no deliberation about one's own true self. Without Him, there is no love for the Lord nor any systematic spiritual practice. (1)

Without Guru, one does not develop serenity and contentment, and without Him, there is no longing for the Lord, nor the blossoming forth of one's intelligence. (2)

Says Sundar Das, without Guru, there is no annihilation of delusions, just as without money there can be no marketing, as is a matter of common experience. (3)

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### Shabd (3)

By taking Govind's nám and worshipping him, the Jiva goes to hell. If Guru initiates the Jiva, then only can he escape Jam's snare. (1)

By worshipping Govind, the Jiva comes under the sway of Karmas, but when he takes the refuge of Guru, he becomes care-free. (2)

By worshipping Govind, the Jiva drowns in the ocean of worldly existence. Says Sundar Das, it is Guru who extricates him from misery and strife. (3)

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What more can I say by words of mouth ? The greatness of Guru far transcends that of Govind. (4)

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**Shabd (4)**

You will have no answer to give when the account of your Karmas (actions) is finally taken. Says Sundar Das that detailed records are kept of even each and every insignificant thing you do. (1)

Here, you enjoyed sensual pleasures without the slightest fear of Jam, but there, that is, in Jam's region, you do not have any loopholes as in the rule of Popá Báí.\* (2)

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**Shabd (5)**

O Jiva ! You are busy with your own deliberations and plans, but they will all remain infructuous. You may try crores of ways for amassing wealth, but you will get only that much which has fallen to your lot. (1)

Any moment, in the morning or evening or any other time, Kal will pounce upon you all of a sudden. Says Sundar Das, you neither sang the Lord's praise nor did anything good, and so, will go on repenting, but to no avail. (2)

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**Shabd (6)**

You should speak out only when you have learnt the

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\* A fabulous lady named Popa Bai whose rule was marked by extreme leniency and great loopholes to the extent of absurdities and irreconcilable contradictions. The saying became popular that in her kingdom, both green vegetables and deliciously cooked dishes were priced at one penny per kilogram.

manner how to speak. Otherwise, keep mum, with your mouth shut.

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**Shabd (7)**

O hypocrite (ignorant one) ! Sleeping all the time, you have now completely gone to sleep, that is, become totally oblivious of the Lord. You have wept and wept, many a time. Secretly accumulating wealth all the time, you have kept it hidden. And constantly wasting it, you have exhausted it all. (1)

Your days are gone, just looking at the world and whatever you have sown all your life is nothing but the seeds of poison. Says Sundar Das, you have not sung the Lord's Name and all the time you have carried on your shoulders the load of Karmas. (2)

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**Shabd (8)**

Be care-free, and worry not, for, He alone who has given you mouth, will worry about feeding you. Why not remain lying with legs stretched ? He who has given you the stomach, will fill it.

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**Shabd (9)**

Know, ye, that none remains hungry in this world. The Lord gives food to all, the ant as well as the elephant. (1)

Says Sundar Das, you hypocrite, why don't you have faith ? I have tried to explain to you again and again. (2)

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## (109) DHARNI DAS JI

Dharní Dás Jí was born in the seventeenth century in a Vaishnav family belonging to the Shrivastav Kayasth caste in a village called Mánjhi in Chhaprá District, Bihár. His grand-father, Tikait Das, was a religious minded person. His father, Paras Ram Das, too, was a wellknown and influential figure. His mother's name was Virmá Devi. Considering the birth-time of the boy, Dharni, the Pandits predicted that he would enjoy a long life and would be a devotee, too.

Dharni Das Ji was employed as the Díwán\* under the Nawab landlords of Mánjhí. On the death of his father in 1656 A. D., he got a sudden shock, and became very much aggrieved at heart. From that time, he became indifferent towards his work and remained sad and morose all the time. Simultaneously, his past Sanskar and the religious environment in which he lived as also his family circumstances, did, further, intensify his feeling of renunciation and other spiritual instincts, and he became habituated in remaining lost in the remembrance of the Lord.

It is said that one day Dharni Das Ji was engaged in his work concerning the landed property of his master, and as he was going through the papers, he, all of a sudden, overturned a hubble-bubble and a pot containing water, as a result of which all the records and books of account became wet through and through. On being asked why he did so, Dharni Das Ji gave no reply. Ultimately, being hard pressed by his displeased masters, he said that Jagannath Ji's dress had caught fire while his Arti was being performed. He had extinguished the fire by pouring water on it. The landlord and his men would not believe this statement and they made fun of Dharni Das Ji. Thereupon Dharni Das Ji kept aside the books of account and left saying

No longer shall I do the work of writing books of account. I have now come to remember Sat Guru's Nam.

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\* A chief officer of State. Head of the revenue or financial department.

Afterwards, when an enquiry was made by sending two trusted men to Jagannath Puri, it was found out that, actually, at the time when Dharni Das Ji poured water from the vessel he had with him, fire had broken out in Jagannath Ji's temple, which was extinguished by a person who appeared there and looked like Dharni Das Ji. On hearing this account, the landlord became very much ashamed and went to Dharni Das Ji to beg for his pardon and call him back, but Dharni Das Ji declined to return to his job and said that he should be now left alone so that he could spend his time singing the Lord's praise. The landlord wanted to make a gift of a lot of cash money and land to him for his maintenance, but he declined to accept the gift.

After relinquishing his job, Dharni Das Ji built a cottage in the same village and started living there, donning the garb of a Sadhu. At times, when his above incidence would come to his mind, he would now and then break forth :

I have now come to remember Sat Guru's Nám. No longer shall I do the work of writing books of account.

To attain peace and contentment, he used to remain in search of a perfect Guru. When he was leading a family-life, he had received initiation from a Sadhu called Chandra Das and, after taking to asceticism, he adopted another Sadhu, whose name was Sewanand, as his guru. But at heart, he was all the time restless to meet a Mahatma who would enable him to realize the supreme truth and attain perfect knowledge.

He then came to know from somebody that Vinodanand Ji was staying in the district of Muzaffarpur. Accordingly, he went there with the intention of becoming Vinodanand Ji's disciple and with a view to testing him, he assumed the form of a snake and entwined himself round one of the legs of the Chaukí\* meant for Vinodanand Ji. At

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\* A small throne.

that time, he, as per his daily routine, was sitting on that very Chauki and delivering a discourse. The discourse over, he asked the cook to serve food for one guest also in the kitchen and then said "Come, brother, have your food; why do you remain entwined with the Chauki?" As soon as Dharni Das Ji heard this, he revealed his identity by reverting back to his human form and then, falling at Vinodanand Ji's feet, took refuge and shelter under him.

One, however, does not find any account of this story in Dharni Das Ji's writings, but in all of them, he has made mention of Vinodanand Ji in a spirit of great reverence and devotion and has also stated that it was due to Vinodanand Ji's grace and mercy that he woke up from the sleep of oblivion, and everything was clear to him the moment Vinodanand Ji had placed his hand on his head.

Once, many Sadhus, in the course of their wanderings, came to him and arrangements were made for feeding them. But when it was time for dinner, they mischievously said, "You are a Kayasth by caste and have not got yourself purified by imprinting the lord of Dwárká's (Shri Krishna's) mark on your person, and so, how can we offer the food prepared by you, as Bhog to Shri Krishna?" Dharni Das Ji pleaded with them a lot, but they would not listen to him at all. At the end, Dharni Das Ji told them, "All right, give me a little time. I shall go to Dwarka and come back with the distinctive mark on my body." So saying, he entered his cottage and, coming out in no time, showed them the mark of Dwarka on his arm, on seeing which, they were astounded and fell at his feet.

When the time for leaving his mortal coil came, he said to his disciples "I want to bid you farewell now." So saying, he went to the site of the confluence of the river Ganges and Sarju and, spreading a sheet on the water, he took his seat on it and got lost in meditation. After a little while, his body was found drifting with the current. Soon, it was noticed by his disciples that the water had caught fire,

with the flames leaping up to the sky ; and in the meantime, Dharni Das Ji had vanished.

Dharni Das Ji used to practise Surat Shabd Yoga and he was an Abhyasi (practitioner) of a high order. He was a great devotee whose high spiritual status is indicated by his Bani (compositions) which are extremely sweet, soaked through and through with the Lord's love and replete with inner secrets.

### Shabd (1)

For full ten months you stayed with head turned upside down in your mother's womb amidst great heat and fire. (1)

Your boyhood days passed and came vigorous youth whereupon you engrossed yourself in the pleasures of wealth, woman and property. (2)

Old age ushered in and you suddenly realised that, without the Lord, there is great fear of Jam. (3)

Says Dharni Das, try to understand, O mind, that you do not seem to realise that you will go from here empty-handed. (4)

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### Shabd (2)

How will you sing the Lord's praise, then ? Do whatever you can right now, for at the end, your body will be of the dust dusty. (1)

When your end comes, how will you raise your head ? Your tongue and teeth will fail to utter anything. Your pulse will be feeble and exhausted, and gone will be your faculty of seeing and hearing. Your whole body, from head to foot, will cease to function. (2)

Witchdoctors, soothsayers, physicians, Pandits etc, will

be seen moving at your door, and in your house and court-yard. Your mother, father and wife and other family-members will weep and remove from your person all your ornaments. (3)

Your body, mind and wealth will be under others' control and as you think of this, you will repent again and again. Says Dharni Das, "Listen, O Jivas, you should sing the Lord's praise and adopt the Saran of the Guru's holy feet as early as possible." (4)

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### Shabd (3)

I sacrifice myself before Allah (the Lord) alone. He, my Beloved, remains hidden in my heart. (1)

Thou art my master, and I Thy slave. Thou art in the know of all my heart's desires. (2)

I bow before Thee again and again and invariably call out at Thee. (3)

Thou alone art my Mecca and Medina, Thou art my Roza and the Giver of my daily bread. (4)

Whether I recite the Quran or get it recited by others, all that is nothing but Thee and it is Thou who givest me my rosary and my religion. (5)

I am in love with Thee, O my Beloved, and I pine for Thy Darshan. Without Thee, the whole world is like poison to me. (6)

Grantest me Thy Darshan ; that will be my only comfort and consolation. Otherwise, my body will perish. (7)

Thou art Almighty. None knows of Thy greatness, neither a Hindu nor a Mohammedan, (8)

Dharni Das is standing at Thy door. Thou art kind to the poor and the lowly. (9)

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**Shabd (4)**

I have no merit. I have been sold away to the Lord. (1)

That Lord of mine is without a flaw or blemish, while I am all raw and deficient. I am false and my Lord is true. (2)

I am worthless ; my Lord is Perfect. I am a coward and He, a hero. (3)

I am ignorant and He, the all-knowing One. I am miserly while He is munificent. (4)

Says Dharni Das, "My mind is consoled only on finding abode at Thy feet, and so, O Lord, it is when I reach there that I shall be resurrected. (5)

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**Sákhí**

Says Dharni Das, in whichever direction you cast your look, you will find that all are beggars. The only Giver is Sat Guru, who is never tired of giving. (1)

All days are auspicious, and there is no inauspicious day. Your gain will be fourfold in whatever direction you go if remembrance of Guru's Nam is implanted in your heart. (2)

Listen, O Merciful Lord, to this prayer of the slave Dharni Das. Grantest me Thy Darshan. I ask nothing else from Thee. (3)

Prays Dharni Das with tears in his eyes : "Listenest, O Lord, forgivest all my sins. I have taken Thy refuge." (4)

Says Dharni Das, I have taken the Saran of the Lord whose another name is the Protector of the humble and the lowly. Who else will accomplish the task of this humble Jiva ? (5)

Someone has immense wealth, another person has a large progeny, Says Dharni Das, my only source of strength is Thy Nam. (6)

Dharni Das loudly proclaims that spiritual endeavours alone will take the Jiva across the ocean of existence. A Bráhmaṇ, who lacks devotion, is good for nothing, but a Chamár, if he is a devotee, is better. (7)

Says Dharni Das, forsake your married wife if she shrinks on seeing a devotee, but associate with a prostitute if she possesses the attribute of devotion. (8)

Says Dharni Das, whom are you going to bless and whom will you curse ? You should see none other than the Lord in everybody for it is He who resides within all Jivas. (9)

Says Dharni Das, he is not a Pandit who, after reading, brags about his knowledge. That Pandit is praiseworthy who unlearns what he has learnt. (10)

Says Dharni Das, if somebody calumniates you, you should praise him. You will then see the fun in no time. This is the way of Sadhus. (11)

Says Dharni Das, religious observances as well as rites and rituals are useless in Kali Yug. You should only take the Lord's Name by your mind, words and deeds. (12)

Says Dharni Das, you should not give out your inner experiences to anybody. The all knowing Lord is in the know of everything. (13)

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**(110) B Á O R Í S Á H E B Á**

The years of her birth and death are not known. Only this much is known that she was a lady belonging to a high class family of Delhi. Mad with love for the Lord, she left her hearth and home. The members of her family tormented her a great deal. Even then, she did not deviate from her faith and determination.

“I am beholden to the Supreme Essence (Truth), but the world thinks that I am mad”.

She was against all kinds of distinctive dress and garb, all pomp and outward show, as well as all sectarian marks like Tilak. She used to advise people to avoid show and hypocrisy.

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**(111) B Í R Ú S Á H E B**

Bíru Sáheb's name has become immortal because of his unbending renunciation and infinite love for the Lord. He was a chosen disciple of the famous Mahatma Báorí Sáhebá of Delhi. After Baori Sahebá's departure to her original abode, Biru Saheb started attending as well as presiding over Satsang at her place in Delhi.

Biru Saheb's detachment from everything worldly, his love for the Lord and the state of intoxication in which he would remain lost were unique. His compositions are replete with invaluable inner experiences.

The years of his birth and death are not precisely known. Only this much can be guessed that he was born in Delhi three hundred years ago. Yari Saheb was his Gurumukh (chief) disciple.

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## (112) Y Á R Í S Á H E B

It has not been possible to ascertain anything about Yari Saheb's life despite best efforts. It is said that he was a prince belonging to some royal family. In Delhi, he used to remain engaged in the Sewa of his Guru Biru Saheb. After Biru Saheb's departure from this world, he succeeded him and started conducting Satsang at the same place. Yari Saheb's Samadh (mausoleum) can be found in Delhi. It is believed that he lived from 1668 to 1723 A. D.

Yari Saheb's Gurumukh (chief) disciple was Bullá Saheb who was the Guru of Gulal Saheb and the grand Guru (Guru's Guru) of Bhikha Saheb. Yari Saheb had four other famous disciples, viz., Keshav Das Ji, Sufi Shah, Shekhan Shah and Hast Mohammed Shah.

Yari Saheb's great devotion, his being a practitioner of Surat Shabd Yoga and his high spiritual status are clearly indicated by his Bani. All the verses composed by him are drenched in the bliss of love for the Lord and are replete with inner secrets.

**Shabd (1)**

Only the Lord, who is the Redeemer, is all-powerful, and no one else. Says Yari Saheb, if only one meets a Sat Guru, one becomes imperishable and immortal. (1)

Keep looking intently at the Sat Guru day and night, standing before Him all the time. Says Yari Saheb, you will find Him at home itself ; why, then, do you go far ? (2)

**Shabd (2)**

Sat Guru is Sat Purush Himself. He can be found beyond Pind and Brahmand, (1)

He is farther than the farthest and higher than the highest. There is no way, no station, no lane and no bye-lane leading to Him. (2)

He has no beginning, no end, no middle and no shore. He is inaccessible, infinite, unfathomably profound and supremely serene. (3)

Fix your gaze on Him and contemplate His form the way a turtle keeps looking at its egg. The Jiva, who is like an insignificant worm, will turn into a black-bee in a moment thereby. (4)

The Chakor, remaining on the earth, keeps its gaze revetted on the moon which is high up in the sky. Says Yari Saheb, if one contemplates Guru's form with similar undivided attention, then only can one achieve success in Dhyan like the Chátrik being blessed with Swanti rain. (5)

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### Shabd (3)

In this world, without paying obeisance to the Lord, eating food is wrong and forbidden. He alone is the Lord's slave who makes obeisance to Him and remains in attendance on Him all day and night. (1)

Says Yari Saheb, forgetting the Lord, what wretched thing are you doing ? Pay obeisance to Him while you are alive, for, at the end, the grave will be your abode. (2)

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### Shabd (4)

Taking the dust of the Guru's holy feet, I applied it as collyrium to my two eyes. All darkness was dispelled thereby and there was great illumination, which enabled me to have Darshan of my Invisible Beloved, (1)

The brilliance of crores of suns fades into insignificance before that light. By meeting my Beloved, I got the treasures of all the three worlds. Such was the mercy bestowed on me by my Sat Guru that by dieing once, I was able to live for Yugas. (2)

### (113) KESHAV DAS JI

Nothing is known concerning the life of the great devotee Keshav Das Ji except this that he was a Baniyá (trader) by caste, a disciple of Yari Saheb, and a brother-disciple of Bulla Saheb, in whose hallowed line of succession, appeared Gulal Saheb, Bhikha Saheb and Paltu Saheb as Sadhs and Sants. Taking this into consideration, it appears that his life-span covered the period between 1693 and 1768 A. D.

There is a booklet "Amí Ghúnt" (sip of ambrosia) by Keshav Das Ji, each and every couplet of which is in fact, a sip of nectar and clearly indicates his unparalleled love for the Lord, his profound and painstaking Abhyas and his high spiritual status. Two of his Shabds (hymns) are given below as examples.

#### Shabd (1)

I have met my Beloved, who is a Sant and is free from any trace of impurity. His pure body has the refulgence of crores of suns. (1)

I took part in delightful activities of love and drank ambrosia to the full. The partaking of bliss is a regular feature there like a whisk waving all the time. (2)

Love and bliss prevail there and Sohang Shabd constantly reverberates. I take dips in the ocean of bliss, the Lord embraces me. (3)

The Shabd of Sat Purush resounds loudly there. His

supremely refulgent form overshadows the light of  
crores of suns and moons. (4)

He is all light and His refulgence is free from any  
impurity. Says Keshav Das, such is my Beloved. (5)

### Shabd (2)

O my Beloved, I have been enchanted by Thy captiva-  
ting form. Thy love has fascinated my mind and I have  
been sold away to Thee free of cost. (1)

My mind is giving expression to its experiences of the  
ecstatic bliss of the lotus, after tasting and enjoying it  
like a black-bee. And like a moth have I met the  
lamp of The Gyán (knowledge) and have merged in  
Thy light. (2)

Thou art like an ocean full of water, and like an oyster  
have I merged in it and become happy. The oyster,  
which seeks Swánti rain, remains facing in that direc-  
tion all the time. (3)

My eyes, ears, mouth and nose are all directed towards  
Thee. Without Thee, I cannot live for a moment. Thou  
art all-knowing. (4)

Says Yari Saheb that if one meets a Guru who is mani-  
fest and pervades all ten directions, then, on recognis-  
ing Him, one's Surat is absorbed in His love. (5)

### (114) B U L L A S A H E B

He was the chief disciple of Yari Saheb. His original  
name was Bulákí Rám. He was a potter by caste. He estab-  
lished his Satsang in the village Bhurkurá in the district of  
Gazipur where, after him, Gulal Saheb and Bhikha Saheb,  
too, used to hold their Satsang. The Samadhs of all the

three of them can still be found there. The date on which Bulla Saheb was born is not definitely known. It is guessed that his life-span covered the period from 1693 to 1768 A.D.

Bulla Saheb was born of poor parents. He was illiterate and used to earn his living by physical labour. He served under Gulal Saheb and was entrusted with the work of ploughing land. If, while driving the bulls on the fields, he felt a sudden urge for withdrawal or elevation, he would let the bulls go and would sit down there itself in Bhajan. Such was his condition then. For this reason, his master, that is, Gulal Saheb, would be always displeased with him and would chide him a lot. But Bulla Saheb was helpless. He could not control himself when an urge of elation and rapture took possession of him.

One day it so happened that, leaving the plough and the bulls in the field in this manner, he sat lost in Dhyan on a boundary mound demarcating some plots. He was mentally absorbed in the Sewa of Sadhus. Sadhs and Mahatmas from different places had come. Food had already been served except for curd. All this was happening in Dhyan itself.

Gulal Saheb came there in the mean time and finding Bulla Saheb sitting with eyes closed, thought that Bulla Saheb was dosing. He started seething with anger at the ungratefulness of his plough-man and gave Bulla Saheb a hard kick. Bulla Saheb startled and the curd spilt from his hand. Gulal Saheb's astonishment knew no bounds. He was completely at his wit's end. He had not seen the curd in Bulla Saheb's hand before. Bulla Saheb in great humility asked for pardon and submitted "I was engaged in the Sewa of Sadhus. Food had been served except for the curd. I was going to serve that too, but when you pushed me, it spilt over."

This opened Gulal Saheb's eyes and he repented for what he had done. He fell at Bulla Saheb's feet and became his disciple.

Bulla Saheb was a practitioner of Surat Shabd Yoga. His high spiritual status and greatness are clearly evident from his Bani.

### Shabd (1)

I sacrifice myself before the Lord's Nam. I get immense happiness by repeating His Nam. Nowhere else do I find a stable location. (1)

Without Nam, the mind wanders like a cat and a dog going from door to door. (2)

A cripple cannot walk on his legs and reach his village. Without the Darshan and touch of Nam, the same is the condition of the mind, that is, it cannot proceed within. (3)

Seek Shabd within. Only when Shabd is contacted, will the mind be stable. (4)

Says the slave Bulla with folded hands "O Sat Guru ! Merge me in Thy holy feet." (5)

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### Shabd (2)

Be merciful towards me this time, O Sat Guru. Every pore of this Slave's body will then be enriched and blest. (1)

Day and night this slave submits "I sacrifice myself at Thy holy feet." (2)

Thou art, O Lord, supremely pure and true. Thou art enshrined in my heart. (3)

I feel ashamed again and again, realising that this life is of no use without Thee. (4)

Sat Guru's holy feet are the source of all embellishment. Bulla prays for the kingdom of Bhakti. (5)

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Shabd (3)

This world is false, and everybody tells lies. None adopts the path of true Shabd. (1)

Without Sat (Truth), there is no salvation and one goes to hell. Thinking and deliberating within, Bulla remains with Sat. (2)

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Shabd (4)

Take it for granted that this world is like a dream. This Maya is like a witch, it takes your very life out of you. (1)

Like the Jam's agent, she casts her spell on you every moment. (2)

Give up all hopes from this side, that is, the world, and sing the praise of true Nám. (3)

Only the slave of a Sant, who performs the repetition of Nam, will be redeemed. (4)

This slave Bulla has taken Thy refuge, O Lord ! Cuttest Thou asunder his chains. (5)

Ferriest this slave across the ocean of worldly existence and grantest him abode in Thy region. (6)

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(115) GULÁL SAHEB

Like other Sants, Sadhs and Mahatmas, Gulál Saheb also has not written anything about his life in his poetical compositions. He was a Kshatriya by caste, the Gurumukh (chief) disciple of Bulla Saheb, a brother-disciple of Jag Jivan Saheb and the Guru of Bhikha Saheb. He lived some time between 1693 and 1793 A. D.

Gulal Saheb was a Zamindar (land-lord). He had no formal education but was very sharp and intelligent. He was a farmer. He employed under him Bulaki Ram, as a ploughman, who later on came to be known as Bulla Saheb. Bulla Saheb used to find great bliss and happiness in performing Bhajan. When he felt an urge for engaging in Bhajan, he would leave aside whatever work he had at hand, however urgent and important that might be.

One day Bulla Saheb went to the field for the purpose of ploughing. There itself, he sat in meditation and started holding a Bhandara feast for Sadhus mentally. In the meantime, Gulal Saheb came there. Finding his servant sitting idle, Gulal Saheb, in a fit of anger, gave him a hard kick. Strangely enough, he found some curd spilling from the hand of Bulaki Ram, that is, Bulla Saheb. Gulal Saheb was very much astonished. When Bulaki Ram explained to him the whole matter, Gulal Saheb fell at his feet and adopted him as his Guru.

Gulal Saheb used to attend his Guru Bulla Saheb's Satsang in village Bhurkurá belonging to Bashari Taluqa of district Gazipur where his Guru used to live. After his Guru's departure from this world, he used to hold Satsang there and initiate people.

Gulal Saheb had the status of a Sadh. His sweet and tender Bani is replete with his keen renunciation and intense Bhakti.

### Shabd (1)

Only that day will be counted in your favour on which you met a Sant. It is not within my power to adequately describe the greatness of the lotus feet of Sants.

(1)

Waves of water arise from water itself and merge in it again.

(2)

The Sadh is in Hari (the Lord), and Hari is in Sadh, who is not different from Hari. (3)

Brahmá, Vishnu and Mahesh keep behind the Sadh. (4)

Says the slave Gulal that by associating with a Sadh, even a lowly Jiva attains the highest region. (5)

### Shabd (2)

O Lord of the humble and the lowly ! This humble Jiva knows not what to do. How is he going to describe the wretched condition of his mind ? Words fail him. (1)

This mind is unsteady ; it is a thief ; it runs hither and thither all the time. It only likes to remain engrossed in Kam (passion) and Krodh (anger). (2)

O the Merciful Lord ! Have mercy on me so that I can apply my mind to Thy holy feet, enjoy the bliss of Satsang and sing Thy praise day and night. (3)

Have pity on this ignorant Jiva this time. Thy slave Gulal prays to Thee "Makest me Thine own." (4)

### Shabd (3)

Offer your body, mind and wealth — nay, everything to the Lord. Let not your attention be diverted elsewhere day and night. You should go on drinking the ambrosia of Nam. (1)

From the time that you are able to engender love for His holy feet, have nothing to do with the world. He is merciful to the humble and the lowly, compassionate and the store-house of all kindness ; make Him your own. (2)

Do not initiate and impart spiritual instructions to anybody and everybody as you go here and there. You should know that Jivas can be initiated only by the Lord's mercy and through the discourses of Sant.

(3)

What should I say ? I cannot adequately describe my predicament. My evil tendencies are not leaving me. Says Gulal, "I ask for only this boon from Thee, O Lord, that Thou may grant me the holy feet of Sants."

(4)

#### Shabd (4)

O you fool ! you are not uttering Guru's Nam. You are all the time engrossed in Kam and Krodh and have never tried to control yourself.

(1)

You know precious little about your own self and yet you give harangues before others. You resort to religious observances, fast and pilgrimage, only to go round and round in the cycle of Chaurasi.

(2)

Thieves and robbers are residing within you. They pilfer your store. The Sannyási (hermit), the Bairági (recluse) and the Tapsi (one who practices hard penance), are all floored by the mind.

(3)

Jivas remain tied up in worldly pursuits, practise all kinds of deception and remain engrossed in the world. Says Gulal Saheb, he sacrifices himself before Sat Guru and thereby gets rid of the world.

(4)

#### (116) J A G J Í V A N S Á H E B

There are several opinions about the period during which he lived. According to the votaries of Sat Nam, he was born on a Tuesday which was the seventh day of the

bright half of Magh in 1727 Vikram (1670 A. D.) and passed away also on a Tuesday, which was the seventh day of the dark half of Vaisakh in 1817 Vikram (1760 A. D.)

He was born in the village Sardahá in the district of Bárabankí (Oudh). He was a Chandel Kshatriya by caste. He lived the life of a house-holder all along. His father used to work in the fields. As a boy, Jag Jivan Saheb used to tend oxen and cows. From his very boyhood, he was indifferent to worldly affairs and inclined towards Parmarth. He used to associate with Sadhus and Faqirs as and when he would get an opportunity.

One day, Bulla Saheb, in the company of a Mahatma whose name was Govind Saheb (and who was the Guru of Paltu Saheb), came to the same field where Jag Jivan Saheb was tending the cattle under his charge. He asked Jag Jivan Saheb to fill 'Chilam' (the part of a huqqa which holds the tobacco and the fire). Jag Jivan Saheb at once went home running and came back with tobacco and fire on the Chilam. He also brought with him some milk for the two Mahatmas. However, he was afraid that he might get a beating from his father. Bulla Saheb took the milk and said with a smile on his face "Have no fear. By giving us milk, there has not been any shortage of milk in your house, rather, it has increased all the more." Jag Jivan Saheb returned home astonished and he found the milk-pot full to the brim and, everywhere in the room, there was milk and nothing but milk.

Jag Jivan Saheb ran for those Sadhus and going some distance, he could find them. With folded hands, he prayed "Give me your Mantra (esoteric formula) and make me your disciple." Bulla Saheb thereupon cast such a benign glance on Jag Jivan Saheb that a complete transformation came over him, and deep love for the Lord and a feeling of renunciation were aroused in him. Bulla Saheb told him "We came here only to awaken you. You were a great Abhyasi (practitioner of Yoga) in your past life. By

Abhyas for a few days your Yoga will now be perfected.’, Falling at his feet, Jag Jivan Saheb then prayed to him that he might be pleased to leave some sign or mark for him. Thereupon, Bulla Saheb and Govind Saheb tore out a black thread and a white thread respectively from their Huqqas (hubble-bubbles) and tied them round the wrist of Jag Jivan Saheb’s right hand. This practice of tying a black thread and a white thread round the wrist of the right hand is still prevalent amongst the followers of Jag Jivan Saheb who are known as Sat Námís and this black and white strand is called “Ándú.”

From now on, Jag Jivan Saheb applied himself heart and soul to Abhyas (spiritual practices) and the cultivation of Bhakti. People from far off places started coming to him to have his Darshan and receive initiation from him. This generated envy and malice in the hearts of the villagers and they left no stone unturned in tormenting Jag Jivan Saheb. To be rid of them, Jag Jivan Saheb left the village of Sardahá and went to Kotwá. It is said that immediately after he had left Sardahá, it was washed away by the river Sarjú.

Jag Jivan Saheb’s Samadh and throne are still to be found in Kotwa and, every year, there is a big Melá (congregation) of his followers and other people at this place.

Many miraculous feats performed by him are well known. One of them is as follows. The marriage of Jag Jivan Saheb’s daughter with the son of the king of Gonda had been fixed. After the marriage party arrived, the groom’s father said that he and the others of his party would not take any food unless there was some preparation of meat. Thereupon, Jag Jivan Saheb got a vegetable preparation of brinjal made which all the members of the marriage party took with great relish, thinking that it was meat. It is for this reason that Jag Jivan Saheb’s followers do not take brinjal, considering it to be equivalent to meat.

Jag Jivan Saheb was a perfect Sant and his high

spiritual status is clearly revealed by his Bani. The whole of his Bani is studded with gems, and profound inner secrets. Great humility and intense love for the Lord ooze out from each and every part of his writings. On going through them, one becomes beside oneself with bliss and joy and is transported to the plane of true love.

Jag Jivan Saheb's Gurumukh (chief) disciple was Dulan Das Ji.

### Shabd (1)

Thou knowest, O Lord, my condition fully well. Nothing is hidden from Thee. What is the good of my telling you about me loudly ? (1)

Thou goest wherever Thy devotee is in trouble, and, after removing it, grantest him immense happiness. (2)

This has been Thy practice for ages. Why dost Thou deviate from it by putting up excuses ? The Jiva comes to know of whatever Thou revealest to him, and he gets abode wherever Thou choolest to keep him. (3)

Having placed my head and hands at Thy holy feet, I now do not look back. Says Jag Jivan, O my Sat Guru, I am Thine own for ever. (4)

### Shabd (2)

Thou art, O Lord, the all powerful One. I am Thy slave, forgettest me not. (1)

Thou accomplishest the task of that Jiva who has full faith in Thee, and Thou keepest him deluded who does not inculcate faith in Thee. (2)

Thou instantly proceedest to the place where Thy devotee is in some trouble and, removing his trouble, makest him happy in no time, (3)

Many are Thine gifts. How far can I enumerate them ?  
The Vedas and Purans proclaim them. Says Jag Jivan,  
Thy holy feet, O Lord, are my only prop and support.  
(4)

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### Shabd (3)

O Sadhu ! Perform Sumiran internally. Go on repeating Sat Nam, and do not divulge inner secrets to anybody.  
(1)

Remain in the world, and yet, keep yourself aloof from it. Apply your Surat firmly to the holy feet of the all-powerful Sat Nam, and then your Karmas and delusions will be gone.  
(2)

Calumniators, there will be many. Keep them away from you. Be on guard against them all the time, and tread the path of virtue and righteousness.  
(3)

Declares the Lord, One will get the fruit of one's Karma. Says Jag Jivan, remain steadfast in your faith and keep your Surat fixed on the Lord's holy feet. (4)

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### Shabd (4)

This mind of mine has got attached to Thee, O Lord ! Listenest to this prayer of mine. Castest one benign glance at me.  
(1)

How far shall I describe my evil tendencies ? I am given to lust, crooked, greedy and a thief. In the present life as well as in past lives, have I committed many sins. There is no end to them.  
(2)

Looking at Thy own compassion for Jivas, O Lord, wipe out all my sins. Says Jag Jivan that his only

prayer is that the cord of his love for the Lord may not snap. (3)

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### Shabd (5)

O Lord ! I do not have any merit in me. My evil tendencies are many and I have committed innumerable sins. And that is why I have not developed the right understanding. (1)

This body within which I am seated, is like crores of hells. In the company of thieves my sense and understanding have become perverted. I remain in their midst. (2)

They quarrel with me every moment day and night and exhort me to stay with them. I, on my part, want to remain at Thy holy feet, but they do not allow me to do so. (3)

If it is Thy grace and mercy, then only shall I be rid of them and, with Thy captivating form pervading my innermost recesses, I shall attain tranquillity. This alone is the prayer of Jag Jivan that may he ever remain with Thee. (4)

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### Shabd (6)

O Lord ! Listenest, now, to this prayer of mine. Have mercy on me and regardest me as Thy slave. Strengthenest the cord of my love for Thee. (1)

Thou holdest in Thy hand the string by which Thou leadeest every Jiva. This is what my understanding tells me. Thou makest everyone dance to Thine tune. Nobody has the power to do otherwise. (2)

It is Thou who art the cheat, the robber and the

emperor, and Thou alone makest people rob and steal. Thou art the giver and the gift of alms, as well as learning and profound knowledge. (3)

Thou dancest within all and also makest one and all dance. Deliverest me, Thou, from Kal's Shabd. Bestowest, Thou, the mercy on Jag Jivan such that he may be always looking intently at Thy captivating form. (4)

### (117) B H I K H A S A H E B

Bhíkhá Sáheb's family-name was Bhikhánand. He was a Chaubé Brahman by caste. He was born about two hundred years ago in a village called Khánpur Bohná in the district of Ázam Gadh.

From his very boyhood he had a strong urge for Parmarth and the company of Sadhus. Seeing this, his family-members became all very much upset. His parents and well-wishers were thinking of marrying him so that he might turn to the right path. But Bhikha Ji had embedded something else in his mind. Even before he had attained the age of twelve, he left his hearth and home in search of a Guru. He had heard a lot about Kashi (Varanasi). He went there but could get nothing. On his way back from there, he heard that Gulal Saheb of Gazipur was a Mahatma practising Shabd Yoga and it would be worthwhile to have his Darshan. Bhikha Ji went for His Darshan and was very much impressed on seeing Him for the very first time. Bhikha Ji has described this matter in the following Shabd.

When I reached the age of twelve, love for Guru's Nam grew in me. It overwhelmed me and I felt as if all the four stages of my life had passed. (1)

That very moment, food and drink became distasteful to me. My body became very weak and emaciated,

My hearth and home and my village appeared very abhorrent to me, and I had the feeling of one who had lost all his money by gambling. (2)

I was like a deer which, separated from its flock, is very much upset and scared, and my condition was like somebody searching frantically for something which had dropped from his hand. (3)

I decided that I should seek true Satsang where abides the Invisible and the Indescribable One. If it is His mercy, I shall meet Him, though I do not know where and in what form. (4)

Some told me that there were many Sadhus in Benares (Varanasi) who were constantly engaged in the cultivation of Bhakti. I found knowledge of the Shastras there, but no one could tell me anything about Guru, (5)

Staying there for a few days and taking stock of the situation, I found that Karam and Bharam (delusion) reigned supreme at that place. There was a great deal of idol worship and chanting of hymns, and the dealings of the votaries bespoke engrossment in Maya. (6)

I went on awakening yearning for the Lord at heart and, every moment, there was an upsurge of love for Him within me. I knew not on what day and which moment my great good luck would blossom forth. (7)

Day and night, the Sadhus there wrote, learnt and recited many a Rekhtá, poem, Sákhí and Shabd (hymn) which were only the creation of the mind, and they sang in praise of God. (8)

I heard a strange song (Shabd) and when I asked who its author was, I was told that he lived in nearby Bhurkurá village and gave Updesh (initiation) in Shabd Yoga, (9)

I was very much struck on going there and seeing Him, I touched His feet with my forehead. After asking me from where I had come, He very affectionately made me sit down. (10)

Realising that He was my Guru, I was beside myself with joy and felt that my life had become fruitful. Noticing my love and affection for Him, the merciful Guru was pleased and made me His own. (11)

I, Bhikha, can swear that my true form is that of Átmá (Surat) and that Átmá resounds within everyone. (12)

Bhikha Ji found great peace on coming under the shelter of his Guru's holy feet. For fifteen to sixteen years, that is, as long as his Guru, Gulal Saheb, was alive, he performed His Sewa and attended His Satsang with great zeal. Gulal Saheb bestowed great mercy on him. On Gulal Saheb's departure from this world, Bhikha Saheb succeeded Him and for twentyfour years, continued to awaken Jivas to a true Parmarth by holding Satsang for them and initiating them.

From the time that Bhikha Saheb came to Bhur-Kurá, he, not even for once, went out of it. He left his mortal coil in 1763 A. D. when he was about fifty years old. His own Samadh, as well as, the Samadhs of his Guru, Gulal Saheb, and his grand-Guru, (Guru's Guru), Bulla Saheb, can be found in Bhur-Kurá, and one can still meet his followers in the districts of Gázípur and Balliá. Amongst his books, "Ram Jaház" (Ship of Ram) is quite well known. Bhikha Saheb was a perfect Sadh, as is well evident from the secrets he has given out in his Bani.

Many miracles are attributed to Bhikha Saheb. A few are given below.

Once Kíná Ram Aughar, who was endowed with supernatural powers, came to meet him and asked for wine for a drink, Bhikha Saheb said that wine had no place in his

house. Thereupon, Kina Ram showed a miracle by which all the water at Bhikha Saheb's place turned into wine. After a little while, Bhikha Saheb wanted some drinking water. One of his disciples hasitantly submitted "All the water has been converted into wine." Bhikha Saheb broke forth, saying "Go and bring it. It is all water." Indeed, by the time it was brought to Bhikha Saheb, it had been reconverted into water.

A naked Sadhu once came to Bhikha Saheb. He wanted to eat *Perá* (a kind of sweet meet) and drink the water of Tribeni. On Bhikha Saheb's saying that he did not have those two things with him, the Sadhu created them in large quantities by his supernatural powers and distributed them to all those present. However, nothing was left for Bhikha Saheb who said "Give me some, too". The Sadhu tried his best but could not create *Pera* and Tribeni water for Bhikha Saheb and, at the same time, he suddenly developed hydrocele of a very severe type, enlarging his scrotum beyond all proportions. Then, when he fell at Bhikha Saheb's feet, his scrotum became normal. After this, at the behest of Bhikha Saheb, he started wearing clothes.

Once a certain anchorite came. When food was brought to him at night, he said that he took food only during daytime. Thereupon Bhikha Saheb so ordained that, for a little while, day light appeared.

A certain Sadhu who had taken the vow of silence came to meet Bhikha Saheb riding on a lion. At that time, Bhikha Saheb was brushing his teeth, sitting on a compound wall. When he was told about the Sadhu's coming to him in that peculiar style, he said "I have no animal with me on which I can ride to the Sadhu, but I must receive the Sadhu. So I ask you, this wall, to take me to him." Thereupon the wall moved forward. Seeing this, the Sadhu fell at his feet.

Some portions of Bhikha Saheb's Bani are given below,

**Shabd (1)**

Sing Guru's praise with a firm determination, and let what is going to happen, happen. What is destined to happen will happen. There may be persons to calumniate you and do you harm. They may insult you. Do not seek their praise. They may use harsh words against you and bitterly quarrel with you. But you should not care for all that but be courteous and respectful towards them. Says Bhikha Saheb, no matter what calamity or misfortune befalls you, you should bear it patiently and sing the Guru's praise with firm determination, letting what is to happen, happen.

**Shabd (2)**

If you want your good, seek Sat Guru and go to him. Seek Him out, from wherever He has chosen to stay. Keep this thought uppermost in your mind all the time, and sing the Lord's praise constantly. Developing right understanding and deliberating deeply over the matter you should perform Guru's Sewa with your body and mind. He will then be pleased with you and, in His mercy, bestow on you the gift of Nam. Says Bhikha Saheb that though you have remained separated from the Lord for ages, Guru will enable you to meet Him in a moment, and so, if you want your good, go and seek the Sat Guru.

**Shabd (3)**

O Lord ! Grantest me abode at Thy holy feet. Not being near Thee, my mind is restless. (1)

I am a fool, and am an immature and insignificant Jiva. I find it hard to breathe because of restlessness due to separation from Thee. (2)

Says Bhikha, forsakest not, O Lord, this fallen Jiva,  
for the world then will make fun of Thee. (3)

### Shabd (4)

I declare that this is the way of love. No matter what  
happiness or sorrow falls to your lot, you should  
contemplate the Lord's lotus feet. (1)

Becoming alert and thinking over the matter seriously,  
you should cast away all delusion and not mix sugar  
with dust. (2)

You should take to the ways of the Chakor which  
without the Swanti drops, is determined to sacrifice  
its very life. (3)

Says Bhikha Saheb that you should know that whoever  
does not sing the Lord's Name, has affinity with Kal. (4)

### (118) D Ú L A N D Á S J Í

As in the case of many other famous Sadhs and devotees, no authentic account of the life of Mahatma Dulan Das Ji, too, is available. He was the Gurumukh-disciple of Jag Jivan Saheb. According to the votaries of Sat Nam, Dulan Das Ji was born in 1660 A. D. After having attained the ripe old age of 118 years, he left his mortal coil on a Sunday which was the second day of the dark half of Asvin in 1835 Vikram (1778 A. D.)

He was a 'Som-banshi' Thakur by caste and was born in the family of a landlord in village Samesi in Lucknow district. After receiving initiation from Jag Jivan Saheb in village Sardahá, he stayed for a long time in Kotwá in the latter's company. Thereafter, he founded a village called

Dharme in Ráe Bareilly district and stayed there till he left his mortal coil after giving Jivas the benefit of true Parmarth for a very long time.

Amongst the many miracles performed by him one which is wellknown is as follows. In village Umápur in Bárá-bankí, there was a Sadhu called Neval Das Ji with whom a certain Mohammedan Faqir used to stay. One day Neval Das Ji told that Faqir "Your days are numbered and only ten more days are left." Hearing this, the Faqir thought that within the remaining few days of his life he would do well to visit the fourteen seats of Jag Jivan Saheb where Jag Jivan Saheb and his successors had held Satsang and also have a look at the four "Páyá" or signs left by Jag Jivan Saheb. And so, except Dulan Das Ji's "Páyá" he had visited all the seats and three "Páyá". Everybody confirmed to him that what Neval Das Ji had said was true. But when he went to Dulan Das Ji on the ninth Day and, after having told him all about the matter, asked for some holy ashes from him, Dulan Das Ji said "What Neval Das Ji told you is not wrong, but, it is not the chart of your life but the chart of your poverty and misery that has been torn off." Thereafter, on the prayer of that Faqir, Dulan Das Ji gave him permission to stay at his holy feet till next day. When that day too passed off smoothly, the Faqir went happy and pleased to Neval Das Ji and explained to him all that had happened, whereupon the latter smiled and said "Dulan is the maker of destiny, and by dint of his own power and authority, he has torn off the chart of your misery and poverty instead of that of your life. Go and apply yourself to Bhajan without any fear."

Dulan Das Ji lived the life of a house-holder and, outwardly, he never gave up looking after his landed property. Indeed, this is the tradition with all the seats of Satsang and "Páyá" left by Jag Jivan Saheb.

### Shabd (1)

The Lord hears the cry of even an ant. Repeat His

Name mentally. Says Dulan Das, believe me, the Lord is not deaf. (1)

People apply on their foreheads 'Tilak', i. e., marks of reverence for the king of gods (Indra), the king of men and the king of snakes (Vásuki). Says Dulan Das, fie on life, if there is no love for the Lord's Name. (2)

Says Dulan Das, one should make a search for that Nam which alone makes food available to the elephant as well as the ant, day after day. (3)

I have taken Thy refuge, O Lord ! Bestowest Thy mercy on me now and redeemest, Thou, Thy pledge to protect the honour of one who has come under Thy Saran. (4)

Says Dulan whoever seeks the Beloved is like a happy and faithful wife. This is a matter which depends on the individual luck of each, and there can be no sharing or partnership in this regard. (5)

Says Dulan : One's relation with family-members is like that between the river and the ferry-boat. Travellers sailing by the same boat get down at various places and each goes his own way. (6)

Says Dulan, having come to this world, why are you puffed up with pride ? Your life is just a matter of days and, ultimately, your body will mix with the dust. (7)

Other sins may be obliterated by going on pilgrimage, performing penance and giving in charity. But the sin of enmity against a devotee will not be washed away even if one tries crores of ways. (8)

For the humble and the lowly, there is no other benefactor than Guru, just as a crow sitting on the ship's mast has no other place to go and sit upon. (9)

**Shabd (2)**

O Lord ! I know Thy secret. How can I describe it ? My Sant Sat Guru has given out the secret to me. I keep it hidden from the world. Nobody makes a search for the True Abode. All remain stuck in Karam and Bharam (delusion). (1)

The True Abode, that is, Sat Lok, is inaccessible and infinite. The Lord abides there. Beyond that is Alok (spaceless) and Anami who has no form and no name. (2)

Assuming the form of Brahm, He has brought the creation into being, Himself remaining separate. It is He who has created the Vedas and the scriptures. The ten incarnations of Brahm are really His. (3)

The Lord Jag Jivan has sent His true son, Dulan Das to this world, and has given him the key by which the lock will be opened to the gate-way of salvation (redemption). (4)

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**Shabd (3)**

Says Dulan Das, this is a hidden religion, do not describe it openly. Keep it hidden within your mind, just as a widow hides her conception.

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**Shabd (4)**

I always remain worried as to when I shall meet my Beloved. So long as there is oil in the lamp, there is light in which all can see, but when the oil is finished and the lamp is extinguished, all say 'take it away, take it away,' or, in other words, so long as a man is alive, his relations are all friendly with him but as soon as

he dies, they want his dead body to be removed forth-with. (1)

Without the Guru, who is to show the true path ? What can you do then ? Without Guru, one counting the beads of the rosary and repeating the names of various deities, simply wastes his life. (2)

Having understood the instructions of all Sants proceed to the Beloved's region with a firm determination. It is by great good luck that one is able to meet the Beloved, otherwise, it is difficult and fraught with trouble and pain. (3)

Says Dulan Das, I seek the Beloved here, there and everywhere, but ultimately, I find Him near me. I bow before the holy feet of all Sants. (4)

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### Shabd (5)

O Jiva ! Why are you uselessly repenting ? Your days are passing. Understand and wake up. O you fool ! Kal is beating his drum on your head and shoulders. Be careful and sing the Lord's praise. Stand your ground in the battle-field shown by the Guru. (1)

As Ráhu and Ketú are after the sun and the moon, so also is Kal after you and will never let you go. All animate and inanimate beings and objects and all calumniators will be crushed in Kal's mill. (2)

You do not drink the ambrosia of Nam in every breath and in full possession of your consciousness. Pride and infatuation are wine which is the source of sorrow, and you go on drinking that cup of poison. (3)

Forgetting all worldly links and family connections, engender love for Guru every moment. All your worldly dreams and illusions will last only so long as the call of death does not come to you. (4)

When that call comes, the Lord and Sat Nam will be your bridge for crossing the ocean of worldly existence. The slave Dulan Das bows before the holy feet of Sat Guru with love and affection. (5)

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**Shabd (6)**

O Jiva ! Apply your mind to the Guru's holy feet as long as you are alive. Do not be slothful. (1)

One can never depend upon this body. It is just like water subject to ebb and flow. (2)

The body comes into existence and then perishes in no time. Why are you then proud and arrogant ? (3)

Everything is a gift from the Creator. You should repeat His Nam, recognising its greatness. (4)

This very day is the right time to practise Bhajan. No one knows what will happen to-morrow. (5)

Nobody will go from here with anything in hand. The whole world is harassed. (6)

Says Dulan Das, have faith and practise Bhajan. This is what Nam exhorts you to do. (7)

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**(119) MIRZÁ BEDIL**

His full name was Maulana Mirza Abdul Qadir Be-Dil. He belonged to Chughtai tribe. His country was actually Túrán, but he was born in Bukhárá. He came to India when he was quite young and was brought up here. He was high minded and very liberal. In early youth, he used to be in the company of Alamgir's son, prince Ázam Sháh, and he was always a favourite of the prince. So great was his physical strength that he once killed a lion without the aid of any

weapon. After the death of his master and friend, he dissociated himself from the world and started remaining in solitude. Nawab Nizamul Mulk Asaf Jah very respectfully invited him to south India but he would not go and continued to stay in Delhi. His writings in Persian are of a very high standard. He wrote a Díván (a large treatise) as a kind of epitaph for himself, which contains about one lakh couplets. He passed away in Sháhjahán-bád in 1720 A. D.

A few couplets from Mirza Be-Dil's Divan are given below.

How unjust it is my friend that you go out for a stroll in the garden ! You yourself are not less than beautiful lotuses. Turn inside and see the flower garden within yourself. (1)

Why do you labour in vain and suffer pain in search of empty musk-bags ? Engender love for the beautiful Shyam Sundar and turn within. You will enjoy the sweet fragrance. (2)

If you had no desire for the pleasures of the senses, then, who would have dragged you into this inn of thieves (the world) ? (3)

Your desires are the cause of pain and pleasure. Your mind itself is Kal and the net. Your attachment for the world calls you to come in the cycle of 'Thou' and 'I'. (4)

What have you set your eyes upon that you are becoming so negligent and careless ? Death is hovering above your head. Open your eyes and see the shroud being made ready to wrap you in. (5)

From the Guru-darbár comes this call within you every moment, "Give up desire for the world, and engender love in your heart for Guru, and come Home." (6)

I am suffering from the pangs of yearning for your

Darshan (vision). O my Beloved ! Kindly take pity on me and come to me just for a moment only. (7)

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## (120) B U L L E S H Á H

This well known Sufi and devotee manifested himself in Punjab about a hundred and fifty years after Guru Nanak. It is believed that he lived during 1703 to 1753 A. D. He was born in Rúm (Asia Minor) but came to Punjab at the early age of ten. He established his Satsang in Kasúr in Lahore district, where he also left his mortal coil. His mau-soleum can be found there. He did not marry and always used to remain in the garb of a Sadhu. Because of his criticising and trying to show the hollowness of Quran and Shara (precepts of Mohammed), he had picked up a bitter quarrel with Mohammedan Maulvis and Mullahs.

Two of his Shabds are given below.

### Shabd (1)

Wake up now, dear traveller. The night is almost over and the light of the stars is fading. Your sojourn here is like one's stay in an inn where one's arrival is inevitably followed by departure. You do not even now listen to the beat of drums signalling your departure. (1)

Engage in Parmarth this very day, for, you may not get the human form again. Kal is with you and he is always ready to give you the call to depart from here any time. (2)

Everyone here, whether rich or poor, is running after his own gain. You should utter Nám carefully and thereby derive benefit, that is, increase your real capital of spirituality. (3)

Says Bulle Shah, one should fall at the Lord's holy

feet and, giving up all carelessness and negligence, put in some spiritual endeavour, for, unless properly looked after, a field is rendered desolate by animals. (4)

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### Shabd (2)

Lift Thy veil, O Beloved ! What is there to be shy ? By engendering love in me, Thou captivated my heart, and then Thou grantest not Thy Darshan. Indeed I drank the cup of poison of my own choice ignorant as I was. (1)

The dazzling light of Thy ear-rings overwhelmed me and, like a scorpion, stung me. I have been rendered desolate in my love for Thee, but, seeing my condition, Thou art not moved at all. (2)

Thou gavest me a hard blow with the hatchet of Thy love and I became restless and overpowered. My eyes are red, tears flowing from them all the time but Thou didest not think of me. (3)

Arrows shot from Thy two eyes pierced the bosom of this poor Jiva. After having wounded me Thou hast hid Thyself. Who has taught Thee this kind of 'hide and seek' ? (4)

If I am Thy slave and Thou art my Lord, comest Thou to me at least once. Showest me Thy countenance mercifully. I am like a crow tired of flying. (5)

Says Bulle Shah, I say nothing by word of mouth but seek Thee in everything. I do not give out Thy secret to people nor do I say anything out of fear. (6)

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(121) D A R I Y Á S Á H E B O F M Á R W Á R

Dariyá Sáheb was born in a Mohammedan family in a village called Jaitáran in Márwár on the eighth day of the dark half of Bhadon in 1733 Vikram (1676 A. D.), and passed away at the age of eightytwo on the fifteenth day of the bright half (on the full moon day) of Aghan in 1815 Vikram (1758 A. D.). Maharaj Bakht Singh was the king of Marwar at that time. Dariya Saheb's parents were cotton-carders by caste. When Dariya Saheb was only seven years old, his father died, due to which, he went to the house of his maternal grand-father, Kamich, and grand-mother, Kamirá, in village Rain in Mertá Parganá (division) of Marwar and started living there.

From his very boyhood, Dariya Saheb was fond of Bhakti (devotion). Being illiterate, any help which the Shastras (religious scriptures) could offer was denied to him. He sought refuge under Mohammedan Mullahs as well as Hindu Pandits, but no one paid him due attention. Dariya Saheb, on his part, was convinced that those people had nothing to offer. And so, he then went to one "Prem Ji" who used to stay in a village called Khiyánsar in Bíkáner. Prem Ji's Guru was Dadu Saheb, and as a result of Dariya Saheb's association with Prem Ji, Dariya Saheb became imbued with love and respect for Dadu Dayal. In the opinion of some devotees, Dariya Saheb was the second incarnation of Dadu Dayal himself. According to the belief Dadu Dayal had recited the following couplet a hundred years before the birth of Dariya Saheb.

At the time he left his mortal coil, Dadu had said that after the lapse of one hundred years, a Sant would appear in the city of Rain who would redeem countless Jivas.

It is said that the king Bakht Singh was suffering from an incurable disease and he had got tired of trying all kinds of treatment. Finally, by sheer good luck, he went to Dariya Saheb's hermitage in Rain and in great humility

offered prayers to Dariya Saheb, whereupon, Dariya Saheb, in his mercy, got him initiated through his Gurumukh disciple, Sukh Ram Das Ji, as a result of which, the king was cured. Sukh Ram Das Ji was by caste an iron-smith who used to forge chains. His house in Rain still exists and every year a Melá (congregation) is held there.

Some portions of Dariya Saheb's Bani are given below.

### Sakhi

Says Dariya, if Sat Guru's Shabd hits the right person, that is, the Adhikari (spiritually fit) Jiva, the latter becomes steady, and his mind's wanderings come to an end. (1)

The Jiva drowns in the ocean of worldly existence where strong currents of greed and infatuation flow all the time. But if he meets a Sat Guru, who is a perfect swimmer, He will take the Jiva across. (2)

Says Dariya, he has met the perfect Guru. He has eradicated all his Karmas and, ridding him of all his false delusions, enabled him to catch hold of True Shabd. (3)

There is no one so munificent as the Sat Guru and no god is as great as Nam. If the disciple performs repetition of Nam properly, he also becomes Invisible and Inscrutable like the Lord. (4)

Says Dariya, after having obtained the human form, one should try to accomplish one's task. The king and the pauper can both get across if they board the ship of Nam. (5)

Says Dariya, that Jiva will surely continue to drift in the current of Chaurasi if he does not board the ship of Nam and, on the other hand, accumulates on his head the load of Karmas. (6)

Whether you accept it or not, this is true that without Nam, life is useless, there is no end to recurrent births and deaths and the tug-of war with Jam or Kal. (7)

Says Dariya, that the essence of all scriptures and discourses is that one should perform the repetition of Nam day and night. (8)

If one is outwardly bright and shining but is dark and dirty within, i. e., at heart, then, better than him is the crow, which is same both by its nature and conduct. (9)

Says Dariya, give up all useless talks and develop love and affection for Anhad Shabd. If the pitcher is turned upside down, how can showers of rain enter it ? (10)

Says Dariya, that if there are a hundred blind persons and only one amongst them has eyes, the latter will talk of things after seeing them with his own eyes, and this will not be to the liking of the blind fellows. (11)

Gold will ever be gold and glass, nothing but glass. Says Dariya, what is false is false, and what is true is true. (12)

The Sadh speaks out after seeing things for himself and not on the basis of hearsay. All hearsay is false ; what one sees is alone true. (13)

If there is a complete transformation in somebody, then he should know that he has made contact with touch-stone, viz., Satsang, otherwise, the company he has been keeping is false. (14)

Says Dariya, if the milk is fresh, you can make whatever you want from it. But when the milk becomes sour, it lacks that property, that is, nothing can be made out of it. (15)

The anchorite is like sour milk, which makes fresh

milk sour. The anchorite makes the Jiva's soul impure and destroys right understanding. (16)

Submits Dariya to Thee, "O Lord, Thou art the black-bee and I a mere worm, and it is for Thee to protect my honour." (17)

### Shabd (1)

Repose your trust in Nam, and you will not lose anything then. He, who is perfect and self-sufficient, will fulfil your wants. You need not be sad and morose. Water drops from the sky; tell me from where it comes. Without any effort on anybody's part, it flows in all four directions benefiting everybody. (1)

The Chakor does not drink any water on the earth and would rather die without taking any food. The Lord fulfils its desire and it drinks the Swánti rain coming from above. (2)

The swan pecks at, and feeds on the pearl. It does not store or accumulate anything. The Lord gives to the swan what it needs so that it can keep its vow. (3)

On taking abode in the mother's womb, the Jiva makes no effort for its sustenance. The all-knowing Lord knows it all and He fulfils the needs of the foetus there itself. (4)

The Lord illuminates all the three Loks (regions) and fourteen mansions. Why should the Lord's slave, who has the all-powerful Being over his head, at all worry ? (5)

Says Dariya Saheb, when the Jiva meets the Lord, he will come to understand everything. And so, giving up all useless thoughts and deliberations, he should practise the repetition of Nam. (6)

## (122) G A R Í B D Á S J Í

Garib Dás Ji was born in village Chhurání in the Jhajjar Tehsil of the district of Rohtak (Haryána) on the fifteenth day of the dark half of Baisakh in 1774 Vikram corresponding to 1713 A. D. He was a Ját Dhankhará by caste, that is, belonged to the Dalál sect. He was a farmer. He had two daughters and four sons.

Garib Das Ji adopted Kabir Saheb as his Guru. It is said that Kabir Saheb gave him Darshan in a dream and initiated him. According to another version, Garib Das Ji, when twelve years old, was once tending cattle in Chhurani when Kabir Saheb appeared there and, pointing towards a small she-buffalo which had never become pregnant before, said "Give me her milk to drink." Garib Das Ji replied "She does not give milk." Kabir Saheb thereupon said "Try, she will surely give milk." As soon as Garib Das Ji touched the udder of that small she-buffalo with his hands, milk started dripping from it. Seeing this miracle, Garib Das Ji was convinced that Kabir Saheb was an all-powerful Being and, falling at Kabir Saheb's feet, received initiation from him.

At the age of twentytwo, Garib Das Ji started writing a book which contains seventeen thousand Chaupáis and Sakhís. With them, he has also included seven thousand Sakhis by Kabir Saheb.

Garib Das Ji had the spiritual status of a Sadh. He established his Satsang in his house in village Chhurani itself and started awakening Jivas to true Parmarth. He remained a house-holder all his life. He left his mortal coil at the age of sixtyone on the second day of the dark half of Bhadon in 1835 Vikram corresponding to 1778 A. D. The jacket which he used to wear, his turban, Dhoti (wearing cloth), shoes, some utensils (a pot and a cup both of metal) and bedstead are still preserved at the site of his Samadh which people visit to have a look at those relics. Many miracles are attributed to him, Two of them are described below,

One year, there was no rain. On the prayer of the people, he, in his grace, so ordained that there were rains in plenty. This matter reached the ears of the emperor in Delhi. At that very time, one of his enemies had attacked him, and so, he very respectfully and cordially invited Garib Das Ji to Delhi, sending many elephants and cavalrymen to escort him. Garib Das Ji sent back the horses and elephants and, in a simple and unostentatious manner, came riding on a mare to Delhi in the company of five of his disciples. After halting at Mahatma Charan Das Ji's place, Garib Das Ji came from there on foot to the emperor who prayed to him to save him from the onslaught of the enemy. Garib Das Ji told him "If you refrain from doing three things, your enemy will not be able to do you any harm. First is cow-slaughter, second, imposition of tax on food grains, and third, having too many Begams (queens)." At this, the courtiers misled the emperor saying that this Faqir (Garib Das Ji) was a Hindu and he wanted to have the emperor entangled in the net of his own religion. Under the influence of the advice of those fools, the emperor got Garib Das Ji as well as his disciples imprisoned behind three locked doors. The guards said tauntingly "Let us now see. If you are a true Faqir, come out of the prison." A little afterwards, Garib Das Ji so ordained that all the three doors were automatically thrown open. He then came out of the prison with his disciples and left for his own place. Next day, when the emperor was informed about the matter, he became very much ashamed and invited Garib Das Ji again, but he did not come. The emperor offered him five villages as a gift from him but Garib Das Ji declined that offer.

Hearing of Garib Das Ji's greatness, Santosh Das, the only son of a certain banker of village Ásodh in Rohtak district, became Garib Das Ji's disciple and, after some time, Garib Das Ji converted Santosh Das into a Sadhu at the latter's request. Hearing this, his father became very angry, and going to Garib Das Ji, hurled many abuses at him and told him "You have converted my son into a Sadhu. What

will now happen to his wife, your sister ?” In reply to his harsh words, Mahatma Garib Das Ji very softly observed “If you really want your daughter-in-law to be my sister, I assure you that she will remain with me as my sister.” As soon as these words came out of the mouth of the Mahatma, a spirit of renunciation was aroused in that woman in Ásodh and, after breaking her bangles and things like that, she turned a female Sadhu and remained engaged in Garib Das Ji’s Sewa.

### Shabd (1)

Any discussion that you may have with a Sadh will benefit you, no matter if the discussion is for a quarter of a moment. (1)

Let go what is going and keep with you what remains. Enshrine Sat Shabd in your heart and do not utter filthy words. (2)

A stone though lying under water does not become wet within and gives out sparks on striking it with another stone. If similar is the condition of a Jiva, what can Satsang do for him ? (3)

The Lord resides in the houses of Sadhs and Sants and that house in which Sadhs are calumniated is sure to be destroyed. (4)

Says the Lord, I go wherever devotees sing my praise. Peace and tranquillity prevail in that city where a Sant, my dear one, resides. (5)

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### Shabd (2)

O Lord, merciful to the humble and lowly, grantest me Bhakti as per Thy pledge. Makest this slave of a slave Thine own. (1)

This son of a slave is verily Thine own. O Merciful

Beloved ! Thou hast protected my honour for ages. (2)

This slave, who is the son of a bond-maid, is Thy slave and slave only. He remains standing at Thy door day and night. (3)

This servant, this slave, calls out at Thy door. Endless and countless are his evil tendencies and he has made innumerable mistakes. (4)

Says Garib Das, "I am, O Lord, Thy slave's son. Grantest this prayer of mine, regardest me as Thine own." (5)

### Shabd (3)

Listen, O excellent one ! Have no pride. As the birds collect at some place and chirp during the day and, in the evening, leave it and fly to their nests, so also are you to stay here for a few days only, at the end death will overtake you. (1)

You think that you will go on like this for ever, but you should know that you will have to give an account for everything that you do. (2)

O excellent one ! eat, drink and enjoy, but do not accumulate things. (3)

Says Garib Das, the Lord resides within everybody, and so, do not quarrel with or displease anyone. (4)

## (123) DARIYÁ SÁHEB OF BIHÁR

The great devotee Dariya Saheb was the son of Piran Shah who was a prominent Kshatriya of Ujjain and whose ancestors were the rulers of Jagdishpur near Buxar. Dariya Saheb was born in village Dhar Kandhá (Árráh district).

which is situated fourteen miles to the south of Dumráon and where his maternal grand-father used to live. The year of his birth is not mentioned in any of his books, but at the end of "Dariya Ságar", it is written that Dariya Saheb departed to his original abode on the fourth day of the dark half of Bhadon in 1837 Vikram (1780 A. D.). The relevant couplets are :

Dariya Saheb left for the hidden region, i.e., Sat Lok, on a Friday which was the fourth day of the dark half of Bhadon in 1837 Vikram when about four hours of the night had passed. Any discerning person who will understand his Bani will have all his grief and sorrow removed.

According to the followers of Dariya Saheb, he lived in this world for a hundred and six years. On this basis, he was born in 1731 Vikram, i.e., 1674 A.D.

It is said that Dariya Saheb was an incarnation of Kabir Saheb. According to the book "Gyán Deepak", when Dariya Saheb was one month old and was lying on his mother's lap, the Lord gave him Darshan in the garb of a Sadhu and also gave him the name "Dariya". He was married at the age of nine in accordance with his family custom, but it is said that he never had any matrimonial relations with his wife. When he was fifteen, a feeling of renunciation grew in him, and at the age of twenty, Bhakti blossomed forth in him in all its glory and its greatness spread far and wide. When thirty years old, Dariya Saheb started holding Satsang, awakening Jivas to true Parmarth and initiating people in his faith,—activities which his followers describe as "Ascending the throne." In his religion there is an outright denouncement of the worship of the Vedas as well as Sargun or the incarnations of Brahm, idol worship, pilgrimage, fast, religious observances, distinction of caste, and so on. Besides, meat, wine and all kinds of intoxicants are totally forbidden. Dariya Saheb has exhorted his initiates to hold fast to only Nirgun and Sat Purush as

their Isht, so much so that he has even forbidden them to adopt Dhwanyátmak Names of regions below Sat Lok like Om, Sohang, etc. It is for this reason that Pandits became very much hostile towards him and they left no stone unturned to calumniate and torment him.

Some methods in vogue amongst the followers of Dariya Saheb, tally with those of the Mohammedans. For example, their manner of praying to the Lord, bowing in reverence before Him standing and stooping forward, which they call "Kornish", and paying obeisance to Him while sitting, which they call "Sirdá" (Sijdá), agree with the methods followed by the Mohammedans while saying Namaz prayers. Every Sadhu of the Dariya sect keeps with him an earthen hubble-bubble called "Rakhná" and a "Bharuká" (earthen vessel) for carrying drinking water, no matter whether these things are required or not.

All through his life, Dariya Saheb remained in Dharkandhá, though, for a few days, he had gone to Kashi, Maghar (Basti district), Báísí (Gazipur district), and Hardí and Lahthán (Arrah district) for travel as well as for imparting spiritual instructions to the Jivas. He had thirtysix favourite disciples, amongst whom, Dal Das Ji was the foremost. This faith has still its headquarters in Dharkandhá and its branches, as four seats, are present in Telpá, Dánsí, Mirzápur (Chhaprá district) and Manuván Choukí (Muzaffarpur district).

Dariya Saheb wrote many books, the most important of them being "Dariya Ságar" (Dariya ocean) and "Gyan Deepak" (Lamp of knowledge). His other books are : Gyan Ratna, Gyan Múl, Gyan Swaroday, Nirbhay Gyan, Agra Gyan, Vivek Sagar, Brahm Gyan, Bhakti Het, Amar Sár, Prem Múlá, Kal Charitra, Múrat Ukhár, Garbh Chetávan, Dariya Námá, Ganesh Goshtí, Ramesar Goshtí, Bíjak and Sat Saiyá. He wrote two more books which, however, cannot be traced. There are many Sadhus and house-holders professing Dariya Saheb's faith in Bihar,

Trihut, Gorakhpur, Balia and Katak. Actually, they will be found all over India.

This Dariya Saheb and Dariya Saheb who was an inhabitant of village Jai Taran in Marwar are not one and the same person. There are great differences in the Isht and Bani of these two Mahatmas. The writings of both are of a high standard but each is unique in his style. Dariya Saheb of Marwar was born two years after Dariya Saheb of Bihar and left his mortal coil twentytwo years before the latter. Both the Mahatmas were born of Mohammedan mothers belonging to low castes. The mother of Dariya Saheb of Marwar was a cotton-carder and that of Dariya Saheb of Bihar a tailor. Both the Mahatmas were practitioners of Surat Shabd Yoga. They were contemporaries for a period of eightytwo years, though they lived in two different parts of the country, far from each other. The followers of Dariya Saheb of Bihar are much larger in number than those of Dariya Saheb of Marwar.

Some portions of "Dariya Sagar" written by Dariya Saheb of Bihar are given below.

### Sákhi

The light of crores of suns pales into insignificance before the refulgence of Sat Purush. (1)

Crores of nymphs are dancing in His Darbar and His bed-stead is studded with crores of diamonds. (2)

Adopt the Saran of the holy feet of that Lord and, after ascertaining His secrets, sing the praise of that Nirgun Purush. (3)

Crores of nymphs are fanning the whisk for Him, crores of Krishnas are standing at His door, crores of Brahmás are chanting the Vedas before Him and countless musical instruments are playing at His court. (4)

The terrible Jam holds his sway over the three Loks.  
Sat Purush abides in the fourth Lok. (5)

Undecaying and immortal Hansas abide there and  
drink ambrosia which is coming down in showers. (6)

That happiness baffles description. Only he who  
possesses pure knowledge will understand it. (7)

Sat Lok is constituted of spirituality and spirituality  
alone. Without Sat Guru, one is weak-witted and  
blind (ignorant). (8)

White is that region and, on all sides, it is white. A  
white canopy is hung over there. Sat Purush Himself is  
seated on a platform which is white. (9)

Love, bliss, sweet fragrance and beauty prevail there.  
Songs of love and happiness are being sung. There  
are showers of essence of roses giving out sweet aroma.  
The Hansas enjoy all that happiness. (10)

Gift of crores of gold ornaments, listening to crores of  
discourses on Purán, visiting crores of places of pilgrim-  
age cannot be compared with the Gyan or know-  
ledge imparted by Guru. (11)

People utter names of innumerable deities, but one  
should salute only one Nam, that is, the Nam of that  
Purush, which one should seek in the highest region. (12)

From One, originates a legion, branches, leaves and  
root. Verily, when you seek that One, all your pain  
and sorrow will be gone. (13)

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### Shabd

Thou art the Lord and I Thy slave. My Chit (attention)  
is at Thy lotus feet. (1)

Every moment, I repeat Thy Name which takes one to the excellent abode. This slave's life is sustained by the grace and mercy of Thy Name only. (2)

The water-lily is in the pond and the moon in the sky, yet, the latter's picture pervades the water-lily to its great joy. Similarly, I am on the earth and Thou, O Lord, art in the highest region, but still, Thy light shines on me. (3)

Says Dariya that when the Un-muní condition, that is, the condition of intense self-absorption, is attained, there is great illumination within, due to which, all fear of Jam is gone. (4)

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### (124) CHARAN DAS JI

Charan Das Ji was born in a wellknown Dhúsar family in a village called Dehrá situated in the Mewat region of Rajasthan. His date of birth was the third day, a Tuesday, of the dark half of Bhadon in 1760 Vikram corresponding to 1703 A. D. In the book "Sahaj Prakash", Sahjo Bai has described his family, birth-place and date of birth in several Shabds. Two of those Shabds are given below.

#### Shabd (1)

O friend ! Blessed are the earth and the country. Blessed is village Dehra in Mewat, for the Guru has manifested himself there in human form. (1)

Blessed are the month of Bhadon, the third day of its bright half, the Tuesday corresponding to that date and the Dhusar family which saw the birth of the boy, an event which was the harbinger of great joy and delight for all men and women. (2)

Blessed are also the mother of the child, Kunjo, and the father, Murlidhar. It is by virtue of their past good

Karmas that they had the omniscient as their son who would eradicate the delusions of Jivas, enhance their Bhakti, fulfil their desires, grant them everything, eradicate all sins and remove all pain and suffering. (3-4)

Sahjo Bai devoutly wishes that may her Guru Dev live for many, many years and grant her his protection. She congratulates those who are fortunate enough to have his Darshan. (5)

### Shabd (2)

O friend ! He is born today—, a matter of great joy and happiness. He has manifested Himself in a Dhusar family. Music of joy and thanks giving is being played. (1)

The auspicious moment has come on a Tuesday which is the third day of the bright half of Bhadon in 1760 Vikram at 7 o'clock during day time. (2)

Congratulations from all over the village are being offered to the parents as they have a look at the boy. But little do they know who the great personage who has manifested himself in human form is. (3)

My mind knows it for certain that the merciful Lord has Himself assumed the human form to establish and hold Satsang for giving out the secrets of the inaccessible path and to cause the sun of Bhakti to arise and shine in all its glory. (4)

Says Sahjo Bai, her benefactor, Guru Dev Charan Das Ji, has granted her true Nam ; she sacrifices her body and mind before him and salutes him again and again. (5)

Distributing the gifts of love and devotion to Jivas, uninterruptedly up to an age of seventynine years, Charan

Das Ji left his mortal coil in 1839 Vikram (1782 A. D.) in Delhi. The place where he used to stay in Delhi can still be found.

Charan Das Ji's family name was Ranjit Singh. The name of his father was Murli Dhar and that of his mother Kunjo. When he was only seven years old, his father one day went to the forest but never returned from there. The members of his family made an extensive search for him but apart from finding the dress he was wearing at a certain place in the forest, they could not get any other clue about him. Then, Charan Das Ji's maternal grand-father, who used to stay in Delhi, brought Charan Das Ji and his mother to his house.

From his very boyhood, Charan Das Ji had a longing for Parmarth. It has been written that when he was nineteen years old, the ascetic Shuk Dev met him in a forest while he was weeping bitterly swayed by an intense yearning for the Lord, and initiated him in Surat Shabd Yoga. Charan Das Ji spent twelve years in its practice in Delhi, after which, he started initiating people.

He had fiftytwo close disciples, whose fiftytwo separate seats still exist. But Gusáin Yuktánand Ji used to be regarded as his Gurumukh-disciple. Amongst his female disciples, Sahjo Bai and Daya Bai possessed very intense Bhakti (devotion) which is revealed from their sweet and unique Bani.

Many miracles are attributed to Charan Das Ji. They have been recorded in the book "Guru Bhakti Prakash" written by his disciple Ram Swarup Ji. Charan Das Ji enabled his mother to have the Lord's Darshan face to face. Nadir Shah, moved by a feeling of animosity, shut him in prison from where he escaped. Nadir Shah then had Charan Das Ji caught a second time and putting him in fetters and under hand-cuffs and also getting an iron chain tied round his neck before his own eyes; had him shut in

prison and kept the key of the prison door with himself. At night, Charan Das Ji appeared in Nadir Shah's bed-room and kicked him on his head. Nadir Shah started trembling and, falling at Charan Das Ji's feet, prayed for his forgiveness.

Charan Das Ji had predicted two years before hand the exact date and time of the passing away of Shah Alamgir the second.

Some Dohás and Shabds from Charan Das Ji's Bani are given below.

### DOHAS

The Lord is hundred times more loving and affectionate than the mother and, in this respect, Guru is hundred times superior to the Lord Himself. Says Charan Das, Guru Dev not only loves his disciple but also eradicates his evil tendencies. (1)

The Guru's affection for his disciple is like that of the potter for an unbaked vessel. In giving shape to the latter, the potter supports it from inside with one hand and beats it from outside with the other. The Guru also does good to his disciple internally though his treatment from outside may at times appear harsh. (2)

One may perform the Lord's Sewa for a hundred years and that of one's Guru only for a few moments. Even then, there is no comparison between the two. This is also the verdict of the Vedas. (3)

Do not turn your face away from the Guru even if He admonishes you a lakh of times. Engender love and affection for the Guru, and break off your relations with all others. (4)

A woman is an evil no matter whether she is your own wife or someone else. She will burn your hand like fire, be it inside your house or outside. (5)

Do not seek the fulfilment of any desire from anybody.  
Be supremely contented and remain care-free. (6)

Eat, drink and take your seat only after remembering  
Nam. And before starting on a journey, also remember  
Nam. (7)

Do what the Guru says and not what he does. Listen  
to and remember this instruction and advice of Charan  
Das. (8)

Do not accept what the world says. Heed the Sat Guru  
and enshrine His instructions in your heart. Your task  
will then be accomplished in no time. (9)

He who does not keep awake during the last quarter  
of the night and does not perform the Dhyan of Atma,  
will surely go to hell and suffer Jam's punishment. (10)

One who does not remain awake during the last quarter  
of the night and does not perform the spiritual practice  
enjoined by Guru but sleeps with mouth wide open,  
commits a sin. (11)

Says Charan Das, the Jiva who keeps awake during the  
last quarter of the night and practises Bhajan with all  
attention, is sure to attain salvation. (12)

Keep awake during the last quarter of the night and  
drink ambrosia to your fill. If any Jiva does that, his  
desires for worldly pleasures will be eradicated and he  
will become immortal. (13)

If one sits up during the last quarter of the night and  
sings the Lord's praise, he will be rid of recurrent  
births and deaths as well as descent into the transmi-  
gratory cycle. (14)

Everybody keeps awake during the first quarter of the  
night, the pleasure-seeker during the second, the thief  
during the third, and the Yogi during the fourth. (15)

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**CHAUPÁÍ**

If you get any wearing apparel of the Guru anywhere, touch it with your bosom, kiss it and also touch your eyes with it. (16)

If anybody comes from the place of the Guru, circumambulate him and bow before him. (17)

If you go to Guru-Dwara (Guru's place), you should feel elated as soon as you see the gate-way. (18)

From there itself, make obeisance to Guru laying yourself prostrate on the ground and offer him your all when you have his Darshan. (19)

Thereafter, remain standing with folded hands and take your seat only when he asks you to do so. (20)

Remember what he says. All your evil tendencies will be eradicated thereby. (21)

Charan Das declares that such a Gurumukh pleases his Guru. (22)

**Chhappai**

One's legs (feet) are purified when one rushes to the holy feet of Sadh and one's hands are purified when one bows before him with folded hands. (23)

Eyes are purified by having the Darshan of a Sadh, and the tongue is purified by uttering the Lord's Name. (24)

Says Charan Das, the mind is purified by touching the holy feet of Guru Dev who gives out the secret of Atma and enables the Jiva to have the Darshan of the Invisible and Inscrutable Being. (25)

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**Shabd (1)**

O Sadhu ! The calumniator is a friend. Let the calumniator remain near you and do not keep him away. (1)

Just as the gold-smith purifies gold by heating it on fire, so also does the calumniator, by back-biting you, washes away your sins. On hearing his calumny, the evil tendencies of your mind will be eradicated. (2)

Even by constant hammering, diamond does not break. On the other hand, it is cleansed, and it then becomes worth lakhs of rupees. Wicked persons seek to test Sants in like manner, i. e., by calumniating them, but the result is that the whole world becomes illuminated. (3)

Worldly people practise Yoga and perform Yagya as well as the repetition of the names of various deities for the eradication of their sins. But all my difficult Karmas are eradicated by my dear calumniator without making any special efforts on my part. (4)

O my calumniator ! Remain happy in this world. May you never fall ill. Indeed, my calumniator takes me across the ocean of worldly existence. (5)

I sing the praise of the calumniator's blessed feet again and again. Says Charan Das, "Listen O, Sadhu, the calumniator is a great devotee." (6)

**Shabd (2)**

My eyes are thirsting for Guru's Darshan. Sad and morose, I keep looking at his path with a steadfast gaze. (1)

Day and night, I have no peace. I am tormented by deep anxiety, and am restless and worried. My sense and understanding is unbalanced and unsteady. (2)

My body has become emaciated, I suffer excruciating pain, and fire rages more and more furiously in my heart. One moment, I lie down, to sit up the very next moment, and, another moment, I go and stand at the court-yard. (3)

My friends and companions both inside and outside, of course, give verbal consolation to me but "Alas !" says Charan Das, "My beloved Guru Dev does not even grant His Darshan to me." (4)

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### Shabd (3)

O my Guru ! Freeest me now from the snare of the world. I am the slave of Thy lotus feet. I remain waiting at Thy Darbar. I always abide with Sants. (1)

I perform Thy Sewa with no ulterior motive and I am at Thy beck and call all day and night. Grantest me Bhakti of a supremely high order, and that will be enough for me. (2)

I am Thy old slave and Thou art my only prop and support. Thou mayest admonish me and drive me away, even then, I shall not leave Thee but remain engaged in Thy Sewa and Sumiran. (3)

I shall never get entangled in the worship of other gods and deities but shall remain how Thou keepest me. Makest me clean and tidy. (4)

I have no place other than Thy abode. It is for Thee alone, O Guru, to liberate a fallen one like me. (5)

O Guru Dev ! Turnest me towards Thyself. Keepest Charan Das under Thy shelter ; that will be a reward quite sufficient. (6)

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**Shabd (4)**

Thou, my Lord, art the Creator and I Thy slave. I am a sinner out and out, forgivest my sins. (1)

All ten apertures within me are impure ; they are all full of dirt and filth. Thy Name is great and sublime, which I have forgotten, blind and ignorant that I am. (2)

Discarding all good qualities, I have been actuated by evil tendencies, which Thou knowest fully well. How can I hide things from Thee, my Guru, who art the knower of my innermost recesses ? (3)

Have mercy, O Merciful One, castest Thy benign glance at me. Grantest me the wealth of Bhakti and riddest me from the transmigratory cycle. (4)

O Guru Dev ! Redeemest me now in Thy mercy and makest this poor Jiva, Charan Das, Thine own. (5)

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**Shabd (5)**

Protectest my honour Thou, O Lord, who art ever kind to the poor and lowly. Who else but Thee can save and protect me ? All others do spoil my task. (1)

Thou art affectionate to Thy devotees and art called the Redeemer of the fallen and the lowly. Fulfillest the desire of this slave by casting Thy benign glance at him. (2)

Thou art the ship whose mast I have made my abode and, leaving Thee, I cannot go anywhere else. If Thou drivest me away, I cannot find any other place. (3)

The whole world knows, O Lord, that I, Charan Das, have taken Thy refuge. My disgrace will be Thy disgrace and it is for Thee to think of that and see for Thyself, (4)

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**Shabd (6)**

All glory to Thee, my Guru Dev, and all glory to Thy discourses. They have removed all my doubts and made my mind steady. (1)

Taking this rank pauper by the arm, it was Thou who savedest him from drowning in the ocean of worldly existence and gavest him shelter under Thy lotus feet. (2)

Thou Thyself in Thy mercy gavest me Thy Darshan. How and where could I find Thee ? It was not within my power to seek Thee out. (3)

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**Shabd (7)**

When you go to the presence of the Guru, there should be no hypocrisy in anything that you say to Him and you should pray to him without any mental reservation. (1)

Says Charan Das, "I have offered myself to Thee and it is for Thee to keep me where it is Thy pleasure ; I, on my part, will be ever at Thy door, no matter if Thou admonishest me a lakh of times. (2)

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**(125) DAYÁ BÁÍ**

This Mahatma was a disciple of Charan Das Ji and a sister disciple of Sahjo Bai. She, too, was born in the same village, Dehrá in Mewát, where her Guru had manifested himself and, later on, along with her Guru, she too went to Delhi where she remained engaged in his Sewa. She left her mortal coil in Delhi.

She was a caste-fellow of Charan Das Ji and Sahjo Bai, that is, she, too, belonged to the Dhúsar caste. It is said that

she was born in the same family as her Guru. From the available information, it appears that she was born sometime between 1693 and 1718 A. D., and she wrote her first book "Daya Bodh" in 1761 A. D.

It is said that the other book "Vinay Máliká" whose author is said to be Dayá Dás, has also been written by her. There is nothing to doubt this version, for, firstly, the language and style of both the books are the same, secondly, both the books sing in praise of Charan Das Ji as Guru, thirdly, in "Daya Bodh" whose sole author is undoubtedly Daya Bai, the name of Daya Das has been mentioned at one place :

Says Daya Das, repeat the Name of the Lord which alone is the True Essence in this world. By repeating the Lord's Name, you become the Lord Himself and come to know of the supreme secret.

And fourthly, it is also the belief of the followers of Charan Das Ji that Daya Das Ji was not a separate person and that this name was that of Daya Bai herself.

Some of Daya Bai's Sakhis are given below.

In this world there is none so merciful to the humble and the lowly as the Guru who protects a Jiva when He finds that he has taken shelter under Him. (1)

Says "Daya", apply your attention to the holy feet of the Guru mentally as well as by words. There is no other way of getting across the ocean of worldly existence. (2)

Follow the Guru's command by body as well as mind, and do nothing unless ordered by Him. (3)

Never disobey Guru's command, even at the risk of losing your life. (4)

There is no sin which I have not committed. But why,

O Lord, Thou considerest my blemishes ? Rather, Thou shouldst remember Thine own pledge of redeeming the humble and the lowly. (5)

Hearing of Thy praise that Thou art the Redeemer of the fallen ones, I have remained fearless at heart. Either admitest defeat for breaking Thy promise or redeemest me by taking me by the arm. (6)

Innumerable Jivas have attained salvation by uttering Thy Name but this time, O Lord, Thou hast to deal with an uncouth and ignorant fellow. (7)

Thou art anxious about, and takest upon Thyself the responsibility of, one who has come under Thy shelter. Thou, O Lord, knowest everything and where is the need of my elaborating this point ? (8)

I have done nothing—, worship, adoration, salutation, Sumiran or Dhyan. This time, O Lord, Thou hast to protect the honour of Thine own pledge. (9)

Abstinences, spiritual endeavours, pilgrimage, fast, charity—none of them can I boast of. I have remained care-free under Thy shelter just as the simple and ignorant child remains happy reposing all his trust in his mother. (10)

Even if the child errs in lakhs of ways, the mother never discards him. On the other hand, she fondly takes him in her lap and gives him breastfeed. (11)

Ever since assuming the human form here, I have been Thine—that is what everybody says. If there is any disgrace, it will be Thine and, in no way, mine. (12)

If Thou considerest my Karmas, my salvation would be out of question. Having mercy on Daya Das, forgettest, Thou, his mistakes. (13)

“O Lord ! Thou took no time in redeeming many a

great sinner, but now when Thou hast to redeem me, has all your capital been exhausted, so that Thou hast to borrow from Nand Ji,\* Thy father ?” (14)

If I have to bow at all, I will bow before Thee alone, and it is before Thee only that I will make my humble submission. If I have to quarrel, I shall quarrel with Thee alone, and I shall remain at Thy holy feet. (15)

I have been humbly calling out Thee for such a long time but Thou hearest not, O Lord, my piteous call. Either Thou art hard of hearing or Thou hast forgotten Thy pledge. (16)

Says Daya Das that Thou madest no delay in listening to the humble submission of any of Thy devotees and their desires were all fulfilled by Thee. (17)

When the king-elephant was drowning with his trunk, he called out Thee for succour and Thou tookest no time in setting him free from the clutches of the crocodile. (18)

Refer to the account concerning the elephant-king given in chapter 29.

On hearing Prahlád's call, Thou assumedest the form of Nar Singh (man-lion) and, killing Hirana Kush savedest Thy devotee (Prahlaḍ). (19)

Refer to the account concerning Prahlád given in chapter 31.

When Indra, requisitioning all his clouds, showered torrential rains on Braj (Bindraḅan) Thou tookest Govardhan on Thy finger-nail, thereby saving the whole of Braj. (20)

Every year, the inhabitants of Braj used to worship Indra and offer Bhog to Him. Once, on Shri Krishna's advice, they worshipped the hill, Govardhan, instead of Indra, whereupon the latter, burning in anger, ordered all his clouds to shower torrential rains on

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\* Nand Ji was Sri Krishna's father.

the village Gokul and inundate it. Shri Krishna thereupon lifted the hill Goverdhan taking it on his finger-nail and saved Gokul under its cover

When Draupadi called out "O Lord, O Lord", her Sári was made unendingly long by Thee. The honour of Draupadi was thus protected by Thee and Dussásan was defeated. (21)

King Yudhisthar lost his wife Draupadi whom he had staked in a bout of gambling with the Kauravs. Dussasan then pulled her Sari in the jam-packed royal court with a view to stripping her. Finding no one else to help her, she remembered her Isht Shri Krishna in great humility. Shri Krishna increased the length of her Sari to such an extent that Dussasan became tired of pulling it but could not reach its end.

The Brahman Sudámá, a poor fellow, was in a moment made a king by Thee with a palace of gold bedecked with jewels and looking like the Lord Vishnu's abode. (22)

Refer to chapter 14 where an account concerning Sudama Ji has been given.

Dhaná, the Ját, who ploughed barren land, gave away all the wheat seeds, meant for sowing, to some Sadhus. By the grace of Shri Gopal (the Lord), his field was lush green. (23)

Refer to the account concerning the devotee Dhana given in chapter 44.

Nam Dev's dead cow was revived by Thee, O Lord ! What is difficult for Thee when Thou hast evolved the human form out of water ? (24)

Refer to chapter 33 in which an account concerning Nam Dev has been given.

Pípá dived into the ocean and was about to drown. Thou, in Thy mercy, gavest him Thy Darshan and all his agony was gone. (25)

Refer to the account concerning Pipa Ji given in chapter 42.

Mischievous persons, with a view to having some fun, invited all the beggars of the city to Kabir Saheb's place. Bagfuls of food grains were then dumped by Thee at his door. (26)

Refer to the account concerning Kabir Saheb in chapter 95.

When areca-nuts on behalf of Rai Das were thrown by a Brahman into the river Ganges, the latter raised her hands out of the water and took those areca nuts. It is indeed a wonder that people do not like to sing the Lord's exploits and they do not engender love for the Lord. (27)

Refer to the account concerning Rai Das given in chapter 96.

Válmiki, whose constant occupation was to kill people, was turned into the foremost of sages by Thee. Though the Ramayan written by Valmiki Ji consists of a hundred crores of couplets, it does not do justice to Thy glory. (28)

Refer to the account concerning Valmiki Ji given in chapter 10.

It took Thee no time to redeem a vile Jiva like Ajámil who used to drink wine, eat meat and fish and do all kinds of evil deeds all the time. (29)

Refer to the account concerning Ajamil in chapter 26.

Shabri, who was an untouchable, was made the foremost of sages by Thee. With great relish, Thou tookest fruits offered by her, thus upholding the glory of Thy devotee. (30)

Refer to the account concerning Shabri in chapter 27.

Thou bestowedest Thy mercy on the simple-minded oil-woman, Karmá, in whose name the first plate of food is still offered to Lord Jagannath Ji. (31)

Refer to the account concerning Karma Bai in chapter 41.

When Gopal (the Lord) bestowed His mercy on the butcher Sadná, there was no delay in his redemption and all his delusions were gone. (32)

Refer to chapter 37 where an account concerning Sadna has been given.

The anxiety of Thy devotee Sená was removed by Thyself, O Lord, and giving him Thy Darshan mercifully, Thou keptest him near Thee. (33)

Refer to the account concerning Sena given in chapter 39.

The female-demon came with a view to doing some vile deed, after having applied poison to the nipples of her breast. All her evil tendencies were forgotten and she was redeemed by Thee in a moment. (34)

The female demon Putna applied poison to her breast and came to give Shri Krishna breast-feed when he was a child. But Shri Krishna, taking the nipples in his mouth, sucked out her life through the same path and gave her abode in heaven.

Thou tookest the unsalted vegetable preparation of Vidur with great relish, and the pride of king Durjodhan was demolished by Thee. (35)

Vidur was a great devotee in Shri Krishna's time and was very poor. One day Durjodhan, the king of Kaurvas, invited Shri Krishna to dinner, and Vidur, too, who had no knowledge of the king's invitation, had asked Shri Krishna to have food at his house. With a view to demolishing the pride of the king, and upholding the honour of his devotee, he first went to Vidur's place and took with relish his vegetable preparation, though, inadvertently, Vidur had added no salt to it and so it was insipid. Thereafter Shri Krishna went to the king.

For the sake of Narsí Mehtá, O Lord, the friend of the humble and the lowly ! A shop was put up by Thee under the name of Shyámal Seth. (36)

Refer to the account concerning Narsi Ji given in chapter 50.

O Thou ocean of mercy and Almighty One ! It took Thee no time to redeem the trees Jamlá and Arjun on the bank of the river Yamuna. (37)

Kuber's two sons, Nal and Kubar, were so proud and arrogant that they were once bathing naked with their wives in a river. The ascetic Narad happened to come there at the same time. Seeing him, the wives put on their Saries but the two males continued to have their bath stark naked as before. Infuriated by their arrogance, Narad cursed them saying "Inert that you are you shall assume an inert form of existence and turn into trees." Thereupon, the two brothers became trees called Jamla and Arjun. When Shri Krishna was a child his mother Jasoda Ji had one day tied him to a mortar for pounding grain. Shri Krishna passed between the said two trees dragging the mortar with him, and entwining the rope tied to the mortar round the two trees, he pulled so hard that both the trees fell down and Nal and Kubar appeared before him, standing with folded hands.

King Nrig, who had turned into a chamelion as a result of a curse, was bemoaning in a well. He was redeemed by Thee, O Lord, after releasing him from the snare of that curse. (38)

King Nrig used to give a lakh of cows in charity everyday. One day a particular cow which had been given in charity on the previous day came and joined a new herd of cows. The king, not knowing this, gave it in charity to another Brahman. As a result, a dispute arose between the two Brahmans who were the recipients of charity on the first and second days and they went to the king seeking justice from him. Both insisted on having that particular cow. The king, being in a fix, started nodding his approval of the argument put forward by both. Thereupon, the Brahmans cursed him saying "You are shaking your head like a chamelion, and that is what you will become." And so, after his death, king Nrig assumed the form of a chamelion and was lying inside a dark well. When Shri Krishna incarnated himself, he redeemed the king,

King Vidyá Dhar, assuming the form of a huge python because of a curse, came in Thy contact. He was blessed with a human body and Thou tookest him to heaven. (39)

King Sudarshan Vidya Dhar was so vainglorious that one day he

was cruising in the sky on an aeroplane. The ascetic Angira was at that time engaged in penance in the forest. The king passed over him one hundred times, at which the ascetic, getting infuriated, cursed him saying "Turn into a python." And the king fell from above in the form of a python. When the incarnation of Shri Krishna took place, the python grabbed Nand Ji's feet with his mouth when Nand Ji had gone to the temple of a goddess taking Shri Krishna with him. Nand Ji thereupon cried out "O Krishna ! The python is about to swallow me. Do save me " Shri Krishna then touched the python with his feet, whereupon it turned into a handsome human being and stood before Shri Krishna with folded hands.

Thou redeemedest even a prostitute. O the merciful Lord of Daya Das (Daya Bai) ! Now redeemest me, holding me by the arm. (40)

The agents of Jam were tormenting a certain prostitute as she was about to die, when a Sadhu happened to come there. Lamenting piteously, the prostitute begged of him to save her. Thinking that she was not fit to receive initiation in Mantra (esoteric formula), he said "Take that Nam which a parrot is taught to utter." The prostitute thereupon took Ram's Name, and as soon as she uttered that name, an air-ship came, boarding which, she went straight to Vaikunth (heaven).

When Vibhikhan came before Thee, Thou madest the gift of Lanká to him. Knowing that Rávan was the enemy of Thy devotee Vibhikhan, Thou madest Ravan's ten heads mix with the dust. (41)

Shri Ram Chandra killed Ravan, the enemy of his devotee Vibhikhan, and made a gift of the kingdom of Lanka to Vibhikhan.

Seeing Mádhav Dás in pain, the Lord bestowed mercy on him. Removing his bodily ailment, He made a gift of Bhakti to him. (42)

Madhav Das, who was a devout priest of Jagannath Ji, had contracted some serious disease. The other priests took him to the sea-beach and came back after making him sit there. At night when he felt cold, Jagannath Ji went to him and had his body covered with his own yellow dress and also cured him of the disease. Next morning, on not finding the yellow dress on the idol, a search

was made for it and they found it on the person of Madhav Das Ji. They could then realise his greatness and brought him back to the temple with great respect.

As soon as the dust of the Lord's holy feet fell on the stone into which the wife of sage Gautam had turned, she was redeemed. Indeed, limitless is the grace of the Lord who is the very ocean of mercy and compassion. (43)

Ahilya, the wife of the sage Gautam had turned into stone by her husband's curse. Shri Ram Chandra redeemed her by touching that stone with his feet.

Thou gavest a high and most stable position in the sky to Thy devotee Dhruv whom all the gods circumambulate. His fame has lived through the ages. (44)

The Lord has granted his devotee Dhruv (the pole star) such a stable and high position amongst the various stars that all the gods and other stars circumambulate him.

Swayed by passion, Tulsi Das Ji swam across the river Ganges when it was dark night. Such a lascivious person was turned by Thee into the great devotee. Indeed, Thy greatness beggars description. (45)

It is said that Gusain Tulsi Das Ji was very much attached to his wife. Once when she had gone to her parents, he became so restless because of separation from her that he swam across the river Ganges on a floating dead body mistaking it for a log when it was dark night and the river was in spate during the rainy season. He was thus able to reach her parents' house. But when he found the door shut, he climbed to her room with the help of a snake dangling from the roof, considering it to be a rope. Hearing this account from him, his wife was very much wounded at heart and told him "Had you engendered such love for the Lord, you would have turned from dust into gold." Tulsi Das Ji's heart was so pierced by these words that, falling at his wife's feet, he said "You are my Guru", and from that very day, he became up and doing in cultivating the Lord's Bhakti and soon started swimming in the ocean of His love.

The Ráná sent the cup of poison to Mírá, hiding the

fact that it was poison. Mira drank it all, and the poison turned into ambrosia. (46)

Refer to the account concerning Mira Bai given in chapter 100.

Many others in all the four Yugas (ages) have attained the immortal region by Thy grace and mercy, O Lord !  
How far shall I describe ? (47)

Infinite, therefore, is the glory of Thy Name. IT is like a spark of fire reducing the deep forest into ashes. (48)

Yoga, Yagya, Jap (repetition of names of various deities), Tap (penance), fast, pilgrimage, religious observances, rites and rituals, the four Vedas and the six Shastras (religious scriptures) all these are mere spittle compared with Thy mercy. (49)

Mercy is with Nam, and Nam is with the Sat Guru. Prays Daya Das (Daya Bai) that may the Lord and the Guru abide in her heart. (50)

## (126) SAHJO BÁÍ

Sahjo Báí belonged to a prominent Dhúsar family of Rájasthán. She was a great devotee, and according to Sant Mat, she had attained the status of a Sadh. No authentic account of her life is available. From her Bani, this much is definite that she was alive in 1800 Vikram (1743 A. D.) and she was the Gurumukh disciple of Mahatma Charan Das Ji.

As a proof of the above, some Sákhis from her own book "Sahaj Prakásh" are given below.

### SÁKHÍ

I am the daughter of Hari Prasad. My name is Sahjo Bai. I was born in a Dhusar family. I have always remained under the shelter of my Guru's holy feet. (1)

My Guru Dev, Charan Das Ji, revealed to me the

inaccessible secret, and what cannot be attained by Yoga and similar other methods was made easy by him and unfolded before my eyes. (2)

Saluting all other Sadhs and bowing before them, I pray that they may bestow on me this mercy that I may cultivate Bhakti with all my heart. (3)

I, Sahjo, decided to write the book "Sahaj Prakash" in 1800 Vikram on a Wednesday which was the eighth day of the bright half of the month of Fagun. (4)

I was overtaken with great enthusiasm for singing my Guru's praise and, by and by, came out the book "Sahaj Prakash". (5)

The writing of "Sahaj Prakash", which is like a ferry-boat for crossing the ocean of worldly existence, was finished by me in Prichhitpur where I used to live and which is near the beautiful city of Delhi. (6)

It was by the grace and mercy of my Guru Charan Das Ji that I could write "Sahaj Prakash". Whoever reads it or listens to its recitation with love and affection, will have all his sins eradicated. (7)

An idea of her deep devotion to her Guru and her high spiritual status can be had from her extremely tender, sweet and soul-stirring Bani, some portions from which are given below as examples.

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### Shabd (1)

Guru has four different attributes,—those of a touchstone, a lamp, a sandal-wood tree of Malaya hill and a black-bee. (1)

Charan Das Ji says that a perfect Guru has all the four attributes in Him. Each gets from Him what he deserves. He does not let anyone go empty-handed. (2)

He acts like a touch-stone to his disciple who is like iron. He converts the disciple into gold in no time. (3)

And like the Sandal-wood tree growing in plenty in Malaya hill, the perfect Guru accomplishes the task of the disciple, who is like a Palás tree, by converting him into a Sandal-wood tree also. (4)

The disciple comes like a worthless worm, and the perfect Guru, acting as a black-bee, makes the disciple like himself. The disciple's previous form thus undergoes a complete change. (5-6)

By the touch of the perfect Guru, the disciple who is at first like a lamp without a flame, also becomes a lighted lamp. The perfect Guru makes a gift of his own light to the disciple and there is great illumination all round. (7-8)

Says Sahjo Bai, her Guru, Charan Das, has all the qualities of butter. He has access everywhere and is all-powerful, no secret being hidden from him. (9-10)

He knows the inner capacity of the disciples for Gyan (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and Yog. To each, He prescribes the kind of Dhyán befitting his understanding. (11)

The Lord abides in all and yet, He is different from all. He has brought into being human beings with four kinds of intelligence. (12)

The first kind of intelligence is like a line drawn on water, which goes on vanishing as it is being drawn. (13)

That of the second kind is like a line drawn on the road, which has short existence or is short-lived like the whims of the mind. In other words, in this case, the mind no doubt acts, but only superficially, and the Guru's instructions do not sink deep in one's heart

but soon vanish from there. (14)

The third kind of intelligence is like a line carved out on a stone which diminishes, of course, but does not increase in length. (15)

Intelligence of the fourth kind is like an oil drop on water which expands and expands all the time. From a small size, it grows to large dimensions and shows all kinds of hues. (16-17)

The first three kinds of intelligence are common in this world, but only a rare one has intelligence of the fourth kind. (18)

Says Sahjo Bai, all kinds of intelligence are, by themselves, useless, and in all of them, the Guru's mercy is a must. (19)

One is endowed with intelligence if only the Lord is merciful, otherwise not. Nevertheless, all intelligence goes to nought without the grace and mercy of the Guru. (20)

I might forsake the Lord but would not forget my Guru, and in my estimation, the Lord is not equal to my Guru. (21)

The Lord has hid Himself from me, but my Guru, with a lamp, has enabled me to see Him. (22)

I sacrifice my body and mind before Guru Charan Das. I might forsake the Lord, but my Guru, never. (23)

Achieve whatever can be achieved by treading the Guru's path, but never follow any other path. (24)

With faith and trust in the Guru's holy feet, let anything happen — loss or gain, sorrow or happiness or even death. (25)

Do nothing without the Guru's command, and if there

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is any harm, let there be. (26)

As holy as all the sixtyeight places of pilgrimage are the lotus feet of Guru which are the seat of virtuous deeds all the time. Says Sahjo Bai that in the whole of And and Brahmand, there is no place which can be compared with His holy feet. (27)

All places of pilgrimage lie in the Guru's holy feet where virtuous deeds are performed all the time. Says Sahjo Bai that all sins are eradicated by taking the Guru's Charnamrit. (28)

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### Shabd (2)

Says Sahjo Bai that the Guru protects his disciple and removes all his pain and worries. He knows all about the disciple's mind. What do you want to hide, O blind fellow ? (1)

Say the Vedas and Puráns that superior to the Lord is Guru. Says Sahjo Bai that it is true that the Lord will grant redemption, but He Himself will be found in the Guru. (2)

Says Sahjo Bai that the Sat Guru had granted her abode in the region where even an ant cannot go nor can a tiny mustard-seed stay. (3)

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### Shabd (3)

Says Sahjo Bai, no one is to stay in this world permanently but all have to ultimately go to the same place, no matter whether one is a pauper or a millionaire. (1)

This path has always been there and will never cease to exist. Many come and pass through it. You can see that for yourself, says Sahjo Bai. (2)

Others see that you will go from here while you see others going. Says Sahjo Bai, this is the scheme of things. Do not worry about it or think of ways of escaping it. (3)

When somebody dies, his body will be consumed in fire and you will not meet him again. Says Sahjo Bai, "What is the good of weeping and lamenting for him ? Let the devil grieve for him, why should I ?" (4)

Says Sahjo Bai, that by lamenting all the time for a dead person and weeping constantly for him, one may be reduced to a skeleton and may lose one's eyes, but one will never meet him, nor will he hear one's words. (5)

If, on weeping, he comes back, then go on weeping day and night. But says Sahjo Bai, the bitter truth that you will never find him even if your body withers or wears out. (6)

Why do you weep then ? You may weep for one Kalp (several ages) but that will be of no avail, says Sahjo Bai, the dead is dead and gone, and is not to return any day. (7)

Says Sahjo Bai that if you had really love and affection for him, you, too, would have either gone with him or kept him with you taking him by his arm. (8)

He, who is already dead, is gone for ever. You, too, are not going to stay here permanently. Says Sahjo Bai, why do you lament for somebody else, and why not weep for your own sake ? (9)

Most of your life has passed and only a little is left and that, too, is not going to remain for long. Says Sahjo Bai, without devotion to Guru, one's life is being wasted and one should repent, thinking of this. (10)

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## Shabd (4)

Says Sahjo Bai, the Jiva gets location in accordance with his desire. She would assert a crore of times that as one's desire is, so is also one's abode. (1)

Says Sahjo Bai that, after death, the Jiva assumes a form and gets an abode in accordance with the desire uppermost in his mind at the time of his leaving the present body. (2)

He who is very much attached to his house, becomes a rat in next life and abides in a hole. (3)

If somebody hankers after wealth, then, on dying, he becomes a black cobra. (4)

If somebody has a strong attachment for his wife, he will assume the form of a dog. (5)

If a woman is inordinately attached to her husband, she, in her next life, becomes a bitch in a sweeper's house. (6)

He, who has too strong an attachment for his son, is born a hog in the house of a lowly person. (7)

He, who is mad after securing some eminent position in a royal court, becomes an elephant, covering his head with dust. (8)

If somebody at the time of death is extremely thirsty but gets no water to quench his thirst and his whole being cries for water, he will assume the form of a fish and live in water. (9)

If somebody has a strong craving for vehicles which remains unfulfilled, he will be born a horse in his next life. (10)

One gets abode in next life depending on one's desires in this life. The Vedas, Purans' and other religious scriptures have expressed this view. (11)

Says Sahjo Bai, my Guru Charan Das has exhorted me to shun all desires. (12)

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**Shabd (5)**

He who is attached to his Guru, will meet the Lord. He will find abode in the fourth Lok says Sahjo Bai. This is also what the Vedas and Purans say. (1-2)

If the desire to associate with Sadhs is strong and uppermost in anybody, he will, in his next life, assume the human form, get the benefit of Satsang and also be the recipient of Bhakti. (3-4)

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**Shabd (6)**

Says Sahjo Bai that at the time of death, one suffers infinite pain. It is like one thousand scorpions stinging one at the same time.

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**Shabd (7)**

I shall now talk of Kál Mrityu (timely or natural death). An ignorant person will startle on hearing me, but a Sadh or a learned man will understand me. (1)

If somebody hankers after worldly pleasures and has no love and affection for Guru, he is sure to become a ghost though he may have died a timely death. (2)

Says Sahjo Bai, timely or natural death is like this : One lights a lamp after filling it with oil enough to burn for the whole night, and the lamp is extinguished only when all the oil is exhausted. (3)

If by a man or by air or by a moth, the lamp is extinguished even when oil is there, it is Akál Mrityu (untimely death). (4)

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## Shabd (8)

Says Sahjo Bai, she has so far talked of timely death, and now the case of untimely death will be described by her. (1)

If somebody dies by means of any weapon or because of his disease taking a bad turn as a result of lack of self-control in matters of diet, etc., then one should know that he has died an untimely and unnatural death. (2-3)

If anybody dies as a result of taking poison, or because of being possessed by an evil spirit, or by drowning, or as a result of snake-bite, or by being buried under a house which has tumbled down, or strangled by Thugs (robbers) or devoured by any beast of the jungle, then, it is an untimely and unnatural death, and, after death, he will assume the form of a Pishách (goblin). (4-8)

## Shabd (9)

On assuming the form of a ghost, the ignorant Jiva becomes unhappy and miserable. Not only is he himself unhappy, but he makes others unhappy, too, no matter if he had any previous acquaintance with them. (1)

As a ghost, he has a big belly but his mouth is as small as a needle's eye. He, therefore, wanders hither and thither like one mad, driven by hunger and thirst. (2)

He wanders and wanders unable to find a stable location, and he gets shoe-beating as he roams about. (3)

He stays at some filthy place. He is himself dirty and filthy and so also is his dress. (4)

Says Sahjo Bai, if one commits sin and forgets the Lord, one's condition will be like this. (5)

The remainder of his life is spent in Mrityu Lok (region of death), and when that period is over, he goes to hell bound down. (6)

That place is extremely filthy and most horrible. Sinners cry out "Save, O save me", but no one listens to their cries. (7)

Many of them are cast in abominable hell and many are kept standing tied to pillars. (8)

Through the heads of many saw is driven and a large number of sinners are pounded by clubs. (9)

Many are hung head downward, their legs tied somewhere above, and down below, oil is heated in pans and the sinners are soaked with laddlefuls of hot oil. (10-11)

Many are caught and thrown into wells containing night-soil and crows suck filth adhering to their heads. (12)

How much shall I describe? There are many such horrors. Says my Guru that there are fiftysix kinds of such horror. (13)

Jam squeezes and torments all, and everybody, whether man or woman, has to suffer. (14)

The heads of many are pulverised. Sahjo says all this quite frankly and without any reservation. (15)

Jam's body is subtle, so is also the body of the sinners. Jam deals with them just as they deserve, each going through the pain and suffering right and proper for him. (16)

I have described the pain and troubles which Jam

gives. O Jivas ! Hearing them, you should run away from them. I shall now describe Chaurasi (the cycle of eightyfour) in detail. (17)

It is said that there are nine lakh different kinds of aquatic animals (Jivas), in which form you have spent many lives. (18)

There are winged creatures of ten lakh different varieties. This has been known from a very long time. (19)  
There are eleven lakh worms and insects living on and within the earth. (20)

There are twenty lakh of inert (immobile) entities. The Jiva gets tired of wandering amongst them. (21)

There are thirty lakh kinds of land animals and a Jiva has assumed those forms several times. (22)

Then, human forms are there of four lakh different kinds, and you should then know that there are eighty-four lakh of different forms of existence. (23)

You assumed each one of these forms once at least and how can I describe the great pain and misery you suffered ? (24)

It is only after suffering continuously and long that you assumed this human form which, too, says Sahjo, you have wasted without Sat Guru. (25)

I met the perfect Guru, Charan Das Ji, who set me free from Chaurasi (the cycle of eightyfour) and saved me from Jam's punishment. (26)

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### Shabd (10)

Even one moment of this life is priceless, not to speak of one day. Do not waste such a life without singing the Lord's praise.

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## (127) P A L T U S A H E B

He was born in village Nagpur Jalálpur (Nangá Jalálpur) in the district of Fyzábád. He was a Kándú trader by caste. Descendants of his family can still be found in the said village. The general belief is that he lived about a hundred and fifty years back.

His family-priest, Govind Maharaj, used to stay in the same village. Both of them had received initiation from a Sadhu whose name was Baba Jánkí Das, but they found no peace and so they left in search of the True Essence. Govind Ji, on his way to Jagannath Puri, got the Darshan of Bhíkhá Saheb from whom he came to know of the inner secrets. On Govind Ji's return, Paltu Saheb received initiation in the True Essence from him and adopted him as his Guru.

I was born in Nanga Jalalpur situated in Avadh. People called me Paltu Prasad and there was great rejoicing in this world as I was born. (1)

I discarded the caste system and adopted the path of true Bhakti. And thus did this Paltu blossom forth like a flower in the garden of his Guru, Govind Ji. (2)

Having his head shaved in the city of Jalalpur and, his waist-strap torn away in Avadh, did this worthless trader, Paltu, carry on trade within, that is, engage in internal spiritual practices, with ease and facility. (3)

Paltu Saheb always lived the life of a house-holder. For a long time, he stayed in the city of Ayodhya in Fyzabad where he established his Satsang and, by means of his teachings and instructions, awakened many Jivas. He left his mortal coil at the same place. His Samadh and Satsang can still be found there. At other places, too, there are branch-Satsangs which are held by his followers.

Noticing the ever-growing name and fame of Paltu

Saheb, the Bairagis (recluses) of various centres in the neighbourhood of Ayodhya were filled with great heart-burning and jealousy, as has been hinted by Paltu Saheb at various places of his writings. It is said that this jealousy grew to such an extent that the mischief-makers burnt Paltu Saheb alive, but at the same moment and in the same body, Paltu Saheb appeared in Jagannath Puri and vanished immediately thereafter. As a proof of this, the following couplet is given.

I died by burning in Ayodhya. Mischief-makers burnt me alive. I, Paltu, then went to Jagannath Ji to sleep in his lap.

Some portions of his Bani are given below.

### Shabd (1)

Stay and abide at the door of a Sant and, slowly and gradually, your task will be accomplished. Sacrifice your body, mind, riches and all to Him and submit meekly to His reproaches and chastisements. (1)

Like a dog, eat what you get, and remain rivetted to the feet of the Master. (2)

Leave not His door though you may be kicked and pushed thousand times from there. (3)

Says Paltu Das, your object will be achieved if you endure and stick to all this. (4)

### Shabd (2)

Says Paltu, sing the Guru's praise for that will be your only asset. Water is flowing before you and it is for you to wash your hands quickly and cleanse yourself. (1)

Just as the elephant is afraid of even the skin of a dead lion, so also is Paltu scared of a woman even if she is

old and eighty years of age. (2)

Paltu is afraid of a woman, even if she is eighty years old. She sucks the essence out of a man when he is alive, and when he is dead, she takes him to hell. (3)

### Shabd (3)

Paltu says that a dog needlessly barks at the sight of a Sadh. In all the four Yugas, there has been enmity between worldly people and devotees. (1)

Says Paltu that you should engender love for the Lord as firm and abiding as the colour of Majith\* which would not fade and be effaced from the cloth though the latter might become worn out and tattered. (2)

Says Paltu, I have met the perfect friend, that is, Sat Guru, and all my doubts have been dispelled. I am absorbed within myself. Let the world go to the dogs. (3)

What Sants have said has been true all through the ages. One should have faith in their words. If one does not meet the Lord even on reposing faith and trust in Sants and their words, then Paltu Das is wrong. (4)

A Sant can overrule and alter what Providence has ordained for one. You are not sincere and true at heart and that is why there is delay in your spiritual progress. (5)

Forgetting Thee, O Lord, in whom else shall I repose my trust? If somebody else accomplishes my task, people will make fun of me, Thy slave. (6)

That head is really worth the name which is bowed before a Sant. Says Paltu, even a pumpkin is superior to the head which is not lowered before a Sant. (7)

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\* The drug Rubia Manjith, the root of which yields a red dye.

Says Paltu, one abuse, if returned, becomes many. If one does not return an abuse, it remains only one. (8)

Paltu is telling you the truth when he says that you should mend your own mind. What have you to do with others ? You should mind your own business. (9)

One's task is accomplished slowly and gradually and so, why do you become impatient and worried ? A tree bears fruits only in time and not before, however much you may water it. (10)

Says Paltu Das that just as turmeric does not change its colour so also does not a lowly person give up his meanness, no matter if he attends Satsang crores of times. (11)

What can the Sat Guru do if the disciple is not alert and attentive ? Says Paltu, it is like blaming water because wax does not become wet. (12)

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#### Shabd (4)

Your body is getting older. You will have to leave it today or tomorrow. But what a pity that you still cherish a desire to stay in it. All the three stages (childhood, manhood and old age) have passed and you never cared to apply yourself to Bhajan. (1)

Your hair have turned grey, even then you are not awake to your spiritual welfare. On the contrary, you are busy in amassing money by squeezing it from others. (2)

O friend ! What are you going to do when Kal is on your head to squeeze your life from your body ? You cannot avert death. (3)

Paltu says that even then you remain entangled in the meshes of Maya and worldly attachments. (4)

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**Shabd (5)**

The very consideration about Lagan and Mahúrat (auspicious time and moment) is absurd and it only spoils one's task. Hence do not bother about and seek Lagan and Mahúrat. You do not place your reliance upon the Lord, and so, how can any good happen to you ? (1)

You have forgotten Him in whose hands everything good rests. You clumsy fellow ! You bring your own cleverness to bear upon your efforts. (2)

Without the grace and mercy of the Sat Guru, not even a straw will break. O fool ! Have sense even now and know that the world and your body are all transitory. (3)

Says Paltu, those will be a blessed day and a blessed moment for you when you come to remember Nám. All omens are misleading and spoil your task. (4)

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**Shabd (6)**

The recluse, forgetting about his own self, seeks the Supreme Being in water. He wanders in all four directions, but never thinks about his own self. (1)

Brahm is present everywhere and pervades everything like fragrance in flower, fire in wood, water in earth, Ghee in milk and redness in henna plant. No place and object are devoid of Brahm. But just as water cannot be obtained without digging the earth, similarly one cannot have self-realization and God-realization without Satsang. So says Paltu Saheb. (2-4)

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**Shabd (7)**

Pulverise your mind so that you may meet the Beloved. And when you meet the Beloved Lord, you will consider yourself to be the lowliest, give up favouring one and frowning upon another and talking proudly. (1)

You will shun name and fame, and become like a corpse. Even if somebody abuses or uses harsh words, you will pardon him. (2)

You will always praise others, consider yourself lowly, and will be the first in raising your hands in salutation to all. (3)

Paltu Saheb says that you will be beloved of the Supreme Being. Diamond will shine on your forehead. (4)

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**Shabd (8)**

The prostitute becomes barren by co-habiting with many males. She has many paramours and is not satisfied with one man but goes from door to door. (1)

If she, like the Chatrik which takes Swanti water only (but would not drink water from any other source), had remained satisfied with one man only and had hated other males, she would have borne children. (2)

To forsake Sat Purush and worship various deities and gods is the way of the prostitute who, leaving her husband, seeks other males. (3)

Says Paltu Saheb that without resorting to deliberation and discernment, the fool drowns in mid-stream just as the prostitute becomes barren by co-habiting with many males, (4)

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**Shabd (9)**

Only love and devotion find place in the court of the Lord. He is pleased with love and devotion. Krishna refused to partake of the delicious dishes offered by the king Duryodhan because he was not a devotee. But he accepted vegetables offered by Vidur who was lowly, being a son of a female slave. (1)

The Lord is not pleased with observances, penances, rites, rituals, etc. Ram gladly ate berries offered by Shabri with devotion, although she belonged to an untouchable race. He paid no attention to Rishis and Munis (sages), as they were proud of their penances, and had no love and devotion in their hearts. (2)

When the king Yudhishtira performed Yagya, a host people were invited. Their pride was shattered when the bell did not ring because of the absence of Swapach, the scavenger, who was a devotee. (3)

Says Paltu Saheb, "Do not be proud of your high caste. For, in the court of the Lord, only love and devotion are valued". (4)

**Shabd (10)**

If you call yourself a Dás (slave), then do not cherish any Aas (desire). He who expects to get something, is not a slave. You can love only one. If you love the world, your Bhakti or devotion to the Lord will be gone and your love will be centred on things worldly. (1)

If you want Bhakti, break off your relations with the world. And if you become attached to the world, your Bhakti will be no longer there. Hence, Paltu Das says : Forsake one of the two, for, there is no place for two swords in the same scabbard. (2)

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**Shabd (11)**

Nobody, who was inimical towards a devotee, survived. They all were vanquished who perpetrated acts of hostility against devotees. Says the **Mahábhárat** that Krishna saw to it that the five Pándavas were victorious in their war against the Kauravs who were their enemies. And the crocodile, which had caught hold of the king-elephant was killed by Krishna inside water.

(1)

When the sage Durvasa went to break Ambarish's vow of fast, Krishna's Chakra was hurled at him (Durvasa) from unseen quarters. Says Paltu Das that for the sake of His devotee Prahlád, the Lord appeared from within the pillar after breaking it and killed Hirnákush by tearing apart his belly.

(2)

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**Shabd (12)**

If you find somebody calumniating Sants, you should close your ears, for otherwise, you will be committing a sin. And once you commit a sin, you will have to go to hell where you will be running in pain hither and thither crying "Save, O, do save me."

(1)

Even if the calumniator of Sants is your friend, you should regard him as a wicked person, and when you hear him calumniating Sants, you should keep him away from you. Says Paltu Das that both, the calumniator of Sants and one who listens to his calumination, are cast into hell.

(2)

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**Shabd (13)**

A woman should rather remain barren than give birth to a wicked son. If such a son is born at all, it would

be better if he dies soon. If he lives, he will be a liability and spoil everything. (1)

Better than a bad son is the plant *Asclapias gigantia* which, though poisonous, does not bear fruit while the bad son is very likely to have progeny inheriting his bad traits. Says Paltu, she alone is a good mother who gives birth to a devotee. (2)

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### Shabd (14)

It matters little if you are called a thief or a Chándál (a man of the most degraded of the mixed tribes) or Chamár (one belonging to a caste of men who work in leather, a shoe-maker, a cobbler) or a devotee or a seducer of women or one totally engrossed in Maya and her objects. (1)

If one calumniates, let him do so, and do not request him to sing your praise. Says Paltu Das, what he is, the Guru fully knows. On his part, he sings Guru's praise day and night. (2)

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### (128) T U L S I S A H E B

Swatah Sant, Tulsi Saheb, whom people also used to call "Sáhebjí", was the elder brother of Peshwá Báji Ráo. He was born in Poona (Pune) and was a Dakshini (South Indian) Brahman by caste. It was he who had the right to the Peshwa's throne. His father gave him the name of Shyam Rao and when he was only twelve years old, his father got him married against his wishes.

His wife, Lakshmi Báí, was a perfectly devoted lady who remained occupied heart and soul in the service of her husband all the time. One day, being highly pleased at some particularly meritorious service rendered by her, he asked

her to seek a boon from him. She then, at the instance of her mother-in-law, begged for a son. Sahebji granted her prayer and a son was born to her after ten months. When the proposal for enthroning Saheb Ji came, he would not agree to it in spite of a great deal of persuasion. On the other hand, he gave such a profound discourse on renunciation and Bhakti (devotion) before his father that he was unable to give any suitable reply to Saheb Ji's arguments. Even then, his father went on making preparations for enthroning him. When only one day was left before the date of coronation, Saheb Ji, in the company of some cavalry men who had been engaged as his body-guards, went to the garden to meet his father and, on the pretext of taking some fresh air, escaped from there, riding a speedy Turkish horse. By Mauj, there was such a severe dust-storm at that time that it became pitch dark all around, under whose cover, he could get separated from his companions by riding very fast. Getting this news, his father sent his cavalry soldiers in all directions in search of him. But when no news of his whereabouts came from any quarter, he left his hearth and home sad and disappointed, after putting his second son, prince Baji Rao, on the throne.

For several years, Tulsi Saheb travelled through many forests, hills, distant regions and cities, and put thousands of Jivas on the path of true religion. Many years after, on coming to Háthras (Aligarh district), he settled down there permanently and established his Satsang.

Tulsi Saheb's younger brother, Baji Rao Peshwa, several times expressed the desire to meet him and requested Tulsi Saheb that he might please agree, but Tulsi Saheb kept away from him. When Baji Rao was dethroned in 1819 A.D. and removed to Bithúr (Kánpur), he once again beseeched Tulsi Saheb to come and see him, and at his earnest request, Tulsi Saheb did go to him once. The following account of this meeting has been recorded in the book "Surat Bilás".

Once while taking stroll on the bank of the Gangá (river Ganges), Saheb Ji saw a Shudra (an untouchable, a

person belonging to a low caste) and a Brahman engaged in a bitter quarrel. The Brahman was performing Sandhyá (holy rites of morning, noon and evening) on the river bank and the Shudra was bathing. Some water from the Shudra's body came to be splashed on the Brahman, who, enraged by this, started abusing and beating up the Shudra. On Saheb Ji's asking him, the Brahman explained the whole matter to Saheb Ji and complained that the Shudra, by splashing water from his body over him, had defiled him, and since he had no other piece of cloth to change after taking his ablution again, he would not be able to complete his Sandhya. Saheb Ji explained to the Brahman that it was according to his own Shástras (religious scriptures) that both Ganga and the Shudra came from the same region, that is, both had emanated from the feet of Lord Vishnu, and so, how was it that he regarded one as pure and holy and the other as impure and unholy. Hearing this from Saheb Ji, the Brahman felt very much ashamed.

Amongst the people who had collected at the bathing Ghát (place), there was a Pandit in the service of Peshwa Baji Rao who at once recognized Tulsi Saheb, for, anyone who had even one glimpse of his captivating form, would have it implanted in his eyes. The Pandit, on seeing him, forthwith sent word to the Peshwa that his brother was there. The Peshwa came running barefooted and fell at Tulsi Saheb's feet weeping and bemoaning. With great regard and affection, he took Tulsi Saheb to his place on a Sukhpál (palanquin) and he wanted Tulsi Saheb to stay with him, but Tulsi Saheb one day quietly slipped away to some other place.

In the book "Surat Bilas" mention has been made of many miracles performed by Tulsi Saheb during the days of his travels, like curing the sick, reviving the dead, restoring vision to the blind, giving wealth to the poor and blessing the issueless with a son. People quite often fabricate such stories with a view to high-lighting the greatness of Sants. They are of course, all-powerful and it is not at all difficult

or impossible for them to perform such miracles. Nevertheless, They prefer to remain igcognito and do not make a display of Their supernatural powers and things of that kind. Amongst the many anecdotes concerning Tulsi Saheb, one which is well known is as follows :

Once a rich man extended very warm hospitality to Tulsi Saheb and when food was served before Him, he begged of Him the boon that he might be blessed with a son. Saheb Ji instantly got up and picking up His stick left the place saying in a stern voice, "Beg for a son, if you will, but beg from your Sargun Isht (deities of lower regions). True mercy of a Sant lies in this that, if His devotee has a son, He would rather snatch him away so that the devotee may be rid of his attachment."

The year in which Tulsi Saheb was born has not been given in the book "Surat Bilas", but it has been written there that He left His mortal coil probably at the age of eighty on the second day of the bright half of the lunar month of Jeth in 1899 or 1900 Vikram (1843 A. D.) In this way, it is more or less established that He was born some time during 1763 A. D.

At the end of His book "Ghat Rámáyan" Tulsi Saheb has said that, in His previous life, He Himself had incarnated as Goswámí Tulsí Dás, and it was in that very life that He had written Ghat Ramayan, but noticing vehement opposition to it from Pandits, anchorites and people belonging to all other faiths, He hid it and wrote in its place the book "Rám Charit Mánas", which was suited to the times and in which He gave an account of the exploits and adventures of Ram or Ram Chandra, an incarnation of Brahm. The relevant couplets from "Ghat Ramayan" are given below.

(1)

I brought out the book "Ghat Ramayan" in 1618 Vikram. (1)

The whole of Kashi (Varanasi) got a surprise and

shock as soon as it came out. (2)

People clamoured and complained saying "A certain Sadhu, called Gosáin Tulsi Das, has written a book in which he has given no importance to the Vedas and other religious scriptures, nor has he made any mention of the ten incarnations of Brahm. (3-4)

Furthermore, He does not believe that fast and pilgrimage have any value but talks of other things. (5)

There was bitter quarrel over the book between Hirdye (a disciple of Tulsi Das Ji) and the people of Kashi including Pandits and anchorites. (6)

Thinking over the matter, I hid my book Ghat Ramayan. (7)

It was not popular with the world and proved to be a constant source of antagonism. (8)

Worldly people drift in the current of the ocean of existence. Sant Mat (Religion of Saints), on the other hand, is beyond the ocean of worldly existence. (9)

Sants have given out the True Faith but people have taken no notice of it. (10)

Sadhs alone can understand the true significance of the Shastras and of the True and Eternal Being. (11)

Nobody was alert and attentive and that is why Sat Guru did not reveal the inner secrets to anyone. (12)

When I noticed the hostile attitude of worldly people towards Ghat Ramayan, I wrote Ramayan, which is comprised of seven cantos, describing the exploits of Ram. (13)

Only a Sant could understand and appreciate Ghat Ramayan and He alone would find it of absorbing interest. (14)

When I wrote about the exploits and adventures of Ram and Ravan, my book was most welcome to the people of Kashi. (15)

Nobody could recognise and appreciate my faith, and so, I hid the inner secrets from the world. (16)

This world has no value. However, when I composed Ramayan, my outlook and opinion coincided with those of worldly people. (17)

None in this world could recognise the True Essence and so I hid my book (Ghat Ramayan) from worldly people. (18)

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(2)

I wrote the book "Ghat Ramayan" and I give here the date on which it was brought out and other details. (1)

Feeling an urge to write the book, I completed it in 1618 Vikram, having decided to start writing it on a Tuesday which was the eleventh day of the bright half of the lunar month of Bhadon. (2-3)

People of Kashi were surprised on reading my book and there was much tumult and agitation in the city. (4)

Pandits, Jains, Mohammedans and the general public of Kashi started a bitter quarrel. (5)

Pandits, anchorites and the world at large decried "Ghat Ramayan". (6)

Hence, I hid the book and stopped its circulation. (7)

And accordingly, worldly people who know no love, remained ignorant of the modes and methods of Sant Mat. (8)

Thereafter, in 1631 Vikram, I wrote "Ram Charit Mánas" describing what Ram, who came from the region of Íshwar (Brahm), did after incarnating himself. I gave an account of the exploits of Ram and Rávan in this book, keeping in view the fight and quarrel which had been triggered off in the world by the publication of "Ghat Ramayan". (11)

Pandits, anchorites and worldly people at large were happy on going through my new book (Ramayan). (12)

I explained to the blind people of the world in a manner which suited them and hid "Ghat Ramayan." (13)

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From the above, it is quite clear that Ghat Ramayan was brought out by Tulsi Saheb, when He incarnated Himself a second time one hundred forty years afterwards.

There is no doubt that Tulsi Saheb was a Swatah Sant who was in no need of a Guru. But out of respect for tradition, He must have accepted someone as His Guru, just as Kabir Saheb had chosen to exalt Swami Ramanand to the position of His Guru.

Tulsi Saheb used to go often to places quite far from Hathras wrapping His body in a blanket and with a stick in hand. He started His Satsang in a village called Jogiyá about a mile from Háthras city, and initiated many people in true religion.

Tulsi Saheb usually used to remain in a state of withdrawal, and in that very state, an incessant flow of utterances concerning the secrets of higher regions used to emanate from His mouth like a babbling stream. If any of His close disciples happened to be near Him at that time, he would write down what he heard and was able to understand, otherwise, those invaluable utterances would be lost

to the world for ever. The books "Ghat Ramayan", "Shabdavali" and "Ratna Sagar" written by Tulsi Saheb are quite famous. He also wrote another book "Padma Sagar" which, however, is incomplete.

At many places of His Bani, Tulsi Saheb has openly denounced the teachings of the Vedas and other religious scriptures, Purans, Quran, Ram, Rahim and various extant religions. Because of this, people often think that He is a calumniator and an enemy of traditional religion, but this criticism by the worldly people is due to a lack of proper understanding. If anybody directs his attention to the true significance of His verses, he would realise that Tulsi Saheb has not considered any religion to be false, rather, He has clearly stated the status of each religion separately. His only object was to emphasise that one should have as one's Isht the Deity of highest region who is far above all the deities of Pind and Brahmand, and one should perform the Bhakti and Sewa of that Supreme Deity or Being. In performing the Bhakti of deities of regions below the purely spiritual region, one would have to put in the same amount of hard work but one would not get full benefit thereby. The devotee's task will remain incomplete and he will not escape the cycle of recurrent births and deaths. Sooner or later, he will be wandering in that transmigratory cycle, for, any region which is encompassed by Maya, however subtle that Maya might be, is sure to be annihilated.

Some people have tried to prove that Tulsi Saheb's "Ghat Ramayan" is not authoritative. They have used such words and expressions against Tulsi Saheb which only betray their utter ignorance and shallow knowledge. One cannot be blamed very much for being unable to understand the Bani of Sants, but to be partial and biased against them and, by means of one's perverse intelligence try to find all kinds of so-called mistakes in their writings would be improper and wrong. By such acts, harm would be done not only to one's ownself but to others also. There is nothing wrong in telling what is right and true, provided it is really

right and true. Sants, Sadhs and Mahatmas are not at all interested in giving any reply to their calumniators. For this reason, what is being written below is meant only for those who have respect and regard for Sants and who are aware of the difference between Sant Mat (the religion of Sants) and the other religions of the world.

Tulsi Das Ji composed "Ghat Ramayan" in 1618 Vikram. But the evil practices of the various extant religions had been refuted in such clear and unequivocal terms in this book that professionals like Pandits and anchorites, who were in large numbers in Kashi those days, could not bear them and they were up in arms against Tulsi Das Ji. Because of this, Tulsi Das Ji hid the book from the world at large. Thereafter, he wrote "Ram Charit Mánas", with which people were very happy. In this book, he wrote about the profound inner secrets in such a veiled manner that an ordinary reader would not be able to read between the lines, and this was the reason why the book was warmly welcomed by the general public, though it is true that they remained deprived of the benefit which they would have derived by reading Ghat Ramayan and by following its teachings.

The question now is why did Tulsi Das Ji, apparently out of fear, do something because of which harm was done to the world, that is, why did he impress upon people the importance of performing the Bhakti of Ram instead of promulgating the original Sant Mat ? The truth really is that Sants do things which They Themselves think to be proper and not out of fear of anybody or in response to the eagerness expressed by anyone. Whoever were to be benefitted by the publication of "Ghat Ramayan" were automatically drawn to Tulsi Das Ji's holy feet. To purify, heart-burning and jealousy created in the undeserving Jivas, he wrote "Ram Charit Manas". Such persons though deprived of the true secrets, were nevertheless, benefitted to a great extent by reading "Ram Charit Manas" inasmuch as it was a com-

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position by a Sant. All the Jivas in this world do not belong to the same category or class, nor do they have the same Adhikar (fitness), there is a difference in their Parmarthi Bhag (luck for spiritual attainment), too. Tulsi Das Ji wrote what each class of Jivas deserved.

Even after "Ram Charit Manas" had been written by Tulsi Das Ji, Jivas having all kinds of Adhikar continued to come for His Darshan and, out of them, those who were able to accept and adopt Sant Mat, were initiated by Tulsi Das Ji in Sant Mat. Sant being the natural Guru of the world, it is up to Him to vouchsafe protection to any Jiva the way He chooses. Sant assumes the human form for the sake of Jivas only. He functions through that form in such a manner that all are benefitted to the maximum extent.

Hence, what fear of the world could there be for such a great personage that He would hide the true book and propagate things which, according to Sant Mat, are false and are likely to create delusion? The answer to this question is that a Sant never gives up His attribute of kindness and compassion. It is not acceptable to Him to give someone even ambrosia forcibly. Indeed, a Jiva will be benefitted only by what he can gladly accept. And it is also not right to say that a Sant being an all-powerful being, no one can oppose Him. A Sant is undoubtedly all-powerful, but in His outward dealings, He behaves like other Jivas. He does not want to be worshipped or get Himself established by impressing people with the display of miraculous feats. It was for this reason that Kabir Saheb had to go to Maghar, Paltu Saheb had to run away to save his life and Chaitanya Maha Prabhu had to throw his book in the river Ganges and go to Bindraban, leaving Bengal. When, however, it was Mauj, They also stood Their ground firmly, as did Sarmad and Mansur. By drenching the earth with Their own blood, They enhanced the Parmarthi Bhag of Jivas.

In Ghat Ramayan there are references to things and events which occurred after Tulsi Das Ji's demise. From

this, one should not think that Tulsi Saheb made unnecessary additions to the original "Ghat Ramayan" written by Tulsi Das Ji. The original Ghat Ramayan had undoubtedly disappeared from this world and, quite obviously, Tulsi Saheb did not just bring it out of His bag. Rather, He re-wrote the book Himself. It is common experience that a new edition of a book, in case it comes out during the life-time of the author, is made up-to-date. Tulsi Saheb did the same thing for, Tulsi Das and Tulsi Saheb were really one and the same, person. Indeed, Tulsi Saheb, and not Tulsi Das, is the author of "Ghat Ramayan" in its present form in which most of the biographical sketch given by Tulsi Saheb relates to His previous life. And if He has also included in the book certain matters concerning His own life also, they could not be called spurious additions.

The calumniators could not understand the significance of many statements of Tulsi Saheb. They thus got confused. Theoretical knowledge of these matters is useless. He alone who has been able to ascertain the inner secrets by the mercy of Sants, knows and can know all about higher regions. Sants talk of things after seeing them for Themselves, while others speak on hearsay.

People think Tulsi Saheb had a dislike for the Vedas, the Shastras, Purans, Ram, Krishna, etc., and He was against idol-worship. But little do they know and understand who Tulsi Saheb really was and what religion He professed and promulgated.

O Vidya (intellectual knowledge) ! Thou art ignorance itself. Thou hast failed to appreciate the grandeur of Sants. Sants are overflowing ocean of "Love". Thou art soiled with mud.

When the whole world is mad, who is going to explain and to whom ? So long as a person does not come after discarding his cloak of learning and intelligence he will never

understand Parmarth. One who is the slave of learning, can never know of the Lord's secret, whereas, learning itself is the slave of one who is the disciple of a Sant. Tulsi Saheb had come from Sat Desh which is beyond the region of Pár Brahm, and that being so, to pass verdicts against His Bani only betrays one's ignorance and folly.

To say that a crude attempt has been made to accommodate the characters and places referred to in "Ram Charit Manas" in the various inner centres of the human body only shows that people who hold this sort of view have absolutely no idea that a book which is written as an allegory has really an inner meaning, as is the case with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the bifurcation of the moon by Mohammed. It is indeed a pity that such people never read the book of internal knowledge, nor induce others to do so. If they had some inkling of the inner secrets, they would have known that, the inner centres and regions had already been hinted at in "Ram Charit Manas", and not that the various characters, places and events of "Ram Charit Manas" have been, somehow or other, accommodated in "Ghat Ramayan".

Tulsi Saheb has said that the Vedas are ten in number. This statement appears strange to ordinary people. Actually, four Vedas were revealed in this Lok (region) by Brahmá while the remaining ones are located in Brahmand and regions within it. This matter can be explained only by Sants, Sadhs and Mahatmas.

The statements made by Tulsi Saheb that Shuk Dev, Vyas, Narad and others were all under a delusion is neither wrong nor calumny of any kind, rather, it means that, in bygone days, inner secrets, only up to the region of Brahm had been revealed, and these personages could not proceed beyond the limits of the region of Maya-Brahm.

Tulsi Das Ji has written in his Ramayan. How can I describe the eminence of Nam? Even Ram could not do full justice to its glory.

One should not infer that Tulsi Das Ji's redemption had not been effected and that is why he had to be born again as Tulsi Saheb. Sants make their advent here for the benefit of others and not in accordance with the usual process of transmigration.

The critics of Tulsi Saheb have laid considerable emphasis on their contention that He was not the son of Raghubá (Raghu Nath Rao Peshwa). They argue that had He belonged to the Peshwa family, His name would certainly have been mentioned in books of history. One should remember that because of Raghuba's taking the side of the British, Nana Farnavis had dis-inherited him from the throne of the Peshwas, but the right of Raghuba's sons to the throne remained all the same. This dispute continued for a very long time. This, in fact, was the reason why the members of the family of Peshwa were getting pension, but were not treated in a manner befitting the Peshwas till all such disputes had been settled. Tulsi Saheb had left the scene before He was to ascend the throne. In such a situation, one should not be surprised if later historians have made no mention of His name. But if one refers to the Marattha Chronicles, one will surely find His name there. But what, after all, is the use of all these discussions? As it was, Tulsi Saheb remained aloof from the world and away from His family. Only once did he meet Baji Rao when the latter was in detention in Bithúr (Kanpur), but He made good His escape from there in spite of Baji Rao's determined efforts to the contrary.

It was because of this event that the general public came to know that Tulsi Saheb had the right of succession to the throne. But this was not a matter of praise or glory for Tulsi Saheb. Of course, the Peshwa family should be proud of the fact that a Param Sant like Tulsi Saheb had been born in that family.

Some portions of Tulsi Saheb's Bani are given below,

(1)

## DOHAS

Tulsi Saheb says that there are five real jewels in this world, namely, association with Sadhs, Saran (refuge) of Sat Guru, Charity, Humility and Kindness. (1)

Howsoever hard a sinner may be, if he takes the refuge of Guru and clings fast to Him, he will get through because Sants do not discriminate between the righteous and the sinner. (2)

Just as moss never grows on gold and worms cannot eat iron, similarly a devotee of Guru may be good or bad, but he will never go to hell. (3)

Sadhs are the courtiers of the Supreme Being. Everything could be achieved through them. Whoever meets them will immediately be awarded Nam. (4)

One should not seek anything from Sants, for They know what transpires within the innermost recesses of everybody. Their hearts are full of compassion for Jivas, and so, you are worrying needlessly. (5)

One's line of Karmas is obliterated by the Merciful Sant. When the Jiva becomes sincere and true, his body, mind and Surat attain their original form (pristine form and glory). (6)

Only the devotee of Sant is happy, otherwise, everybody is afflicted with some kind of sorrow. Some are suffering in body and mind and some are sad at heart. (7)

The whole world reads and dies but none becomes a Pandit. One who reads 2½ letters of 'Prem' is a true Pandit (learned). (There are 2½ letters in 'Prem' as written in Hindi script). (8)

Tulsi Saheb says that people devote themselves to

worldly learning, but of what use will it be if they do not recognize Sants ? (9)

The Jiva's inner eye has not opened, and though he has his external eyes, he is really blind, that is, cannot see things in their true perspective. Without Sat Guru, he will drift in lower centres and will never be rid of his worldly attachments. (10)

No other Yug can be compared with Kali Yug in which Sants incarnate Themselves. If the Jiva adopts the Saran (refuge) of a Sant, he will get across the ocean of worldly existence. (11)

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(2)

### GREATNESS OF A PLACE WHERE A SANT LIVES

One early morning, Shankar (Shiv) and Parvati (Shiv's consort) were going their way. At one place Shankar lay prostrate on the ground as if paying obeisance to someone, at which Parvati was surprised and she asked, "There is no temple, god or man nearby, indeed, I see no one and yet, you are paying obeisance." Said Shankar then "O Parvati ! Infinite and indescribable is the glory of this blessed land, for ten thousand years back, a Sant used to stay at this very place."

Says Tulsi Saheb "Listen, O Hirdey ! Infinite and incomparable is the greatness of a Sant and that is why Shankar paid obeisance again and again to the place where a Sant once lived."

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(3)

### PAIN AND SUFFERING AT BIRTH AND DEATH

Listen, O Hirdey to what I say. I am going to tell you about the Jiva's misery. (1)

There are four categories of existence in which none of the Jivas has been found to be happy. (2)

Untold are the pangs and sufferings of life and death. If somebody asks, they cannot be adequately described. (3)

The Jiva is roasted in the stomach-fire of the mother while he is in her womb before birth. (4)

His condition in the womb is like that of a worm moving restlessly hither and thither in a drain as the drain-water gets more and more heated in the extremely hot month of Jeth. (5-6)

Great are the pain and suffering undergone by the Jiva when he is born. Outside, too, i. e., after birth, his misery is no less. (7)

Listen to his predicament inside the womb : For full nine months, he has to be in hell itself. He remains hanging inside the womb with head turned downward and covered with stool and urine. (8-9)

Head down, he remains in the mother's womb. And how can I adequately describe the pain he suffers at the time of death ? But the pity is that even knowing all this, the Jiva remains engrossed in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. (10-11)

Childhood is also fraught with pain and suffering. The Jiva does not develop any sense and understanding, intelligence and power of discernment then. (12)

In youth, he enjoys life with a young girl, and when he is old, his physical ailments get aggravated. (13)

Three stages of life (boyhood, youth and old age) are thus passed, but the Jiva does not have even an inkling of the Lord's secrets. (14)

Listen, now, to what happens at the time of death :

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When life departs from his body, then only does it strike the Jiva that he has wasted his life. (15)

But what is the use of lamenting over the matter now ?  
The Jiva has gambled away his life. (16)

He is thrown out of his house and its immediate environment. O Jiva ! You are not going to get a human form again. (17)

Because of Karmas, you have been wandering in the transmigratory cycle. You reaped the fruits of your own Karmas. O fool ! You did not come to your senses then. What can you, poor fellow, do now that you have spoilt your case ? (18)

What good can come out of your developing sense now, for the birds have already eaten up the grains in the field. You were not awake to your own welfare then and lived only for the sake of your relations. (19)

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(4)

One day we have to leave this world. So let us talk about it. Pleasure and prosperity, wealth and treasure will all have to be abandoned in the end. Riches and high position in the world, all have to be given up at the time of death. (1)

When Kal issues orders for death, all the property, land, vehicles, elephants and horses will prove of no service. (2)

Cut asunder the ties and bondages of wealth, wife and property. At the last moment, you will pick up nothing out of these. Your soul will go alone. (3)

Tulsi Saheb says, "All worldly affections are fake. All wasted their life by getting entangled in the world. They give rise to innumerable desires for worldly

objects, thinking that they are going to last for ever, though life here is very short. (4)

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(5)

People give trouble to Sants and Sadhs ; and keep company with prostitutes. They are, in fact, brutes; they follow evil ways and have no sense of discrimination between good and bad. (1)

They are getting burdened by the load of Karmas and are engrossed in sensual pleasures. Such corrupt and dishonest fellows will go to hell. (2)

They look clean but are wretched in their deeds. They put marks for sectarial distinction on their fore-heads, but are always ready to create trouble. They are by nature bad, arrogant, wicked, cruel and passionate. Lust and desire prevail over them. (3-4)

They keep the appearance of a great scholar, but are mean, and fit only to go into lower species. They are debased, and are self-destroyer. (5)

Tulsi Saheb says that they are hypocrite, who behave truthfully with the world, but are hypocritical with Sants. So they will lick the dust. (6)

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(6)

Why do you get lost in the world ? Why are you getting puffed up over your body, kith and kin and people around ? You have to leave them all in four days. (1)

Very many Jivas, thinking and calling wealth, property and country their own, left this world. After great many efforts, they amassed wealth and property, but they did not care at all to know about the secrets of their soul and their creator. (2)

O insane ! Come to your senses ; proceed towards the destination. If you fail to take heed, Jama will summon you. (3)

Tulsi Saheb says, "Jama is every moment recording your acts. He will summon you soon and pass his judgement." (4)

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(7)

Without the Sat Guru, who is merciful towards the humble and the lowly, Jivas go on perishing being beaten up all the time, and even then they do such things that they get Jam's kicks. Indeed, people are so foolish that in spite of Jam's beating, they continue to tread his path and do such things that they again receive Jam's punishment. (1)

The Jiva has knowingly wasted his life listening to religious discourses and recitations from Puran. It is Kal who has propagated the Smritis, the Shastras and the Vedas. (2)

Says Tulsi Saheb, without Satsang and Sant, the Jiva licks the dust again and again, and without the Dín Dayal (Merciful to the humble and the lowly) Sat Guru, he perishes being beaten up all the time. (3)

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(8)

Though endowed with the human form, you achieved nothing. You have remained addicted to pride, and have not been able to realise your true self. Thus the foolish Jiva ever remains deeply involved with Maya. (1-2)

You have amassed wealth, property, gold and silver but at the time of death, they have to be abandoned. (3-4)

It is a pity that even on being endowed with the noble faculties of the human form, you remain deluded. Body, mind, riches, nothing will prove of any avail. Tulsi Saheb says, "Give up this habitation of mere skin. Leave alone all material objects. Adopt the Name of the Supreme Being. (5-7)

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(9)

Only those, who took Saran (refuge) of Sants, reached the destination, otherwise, there is no safety anywhere as Kal gnaws at all the creation. Tulsi Saheb says that Kal fears only Sants and bows before Them. So there is no other place for Jiva except the refuge of Sants, and there is no salvation without Sants. (1-2)

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